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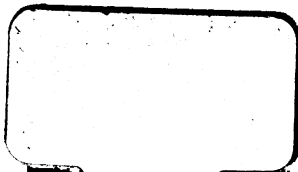
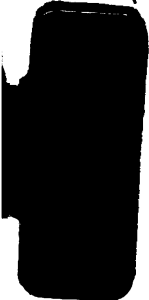
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History of the United States

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MARY OF MAGDALA

By

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THE SIGN OF "B."

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TO
MY WIFE
THIS VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

MARY OF MAGDALA

The caravan was made up of five and twenty camels. At the head of the caravan rode two men on fleet-footed camels. That the riders were men of strength and courage was in every line of their dark faces. Each rider had a sword at his side and a spear in his hand, and they kept a constant watch for unfriendly travelers. Next in line came a white dromedary richly bedecked. The shimmering cloth which covered the beast of burden bulged on either side of the animal in front of the rider; and when the beast made an unusual movement, there was a sound of precious metal. The bags contained the shekels gained by trade in Jerusalem. The rider, like the two that rode in advance, was alert and his hand rested lightly on a Damascus sword. Next came two other riders equipped like the first two, and they were equally as eager as their companions to protect their master. Following these two came twenty camels, one chained to the other and in charge of four cameleers.

The sun was rapidly dropping behind the western hills, and the caravan was anxious to reach Magdala before the gates of the city were closed. And the overseer was eager to report a safe return to Isaac Akiba, his master. The cameleers kept a close watch over the animals, whose burdens were light, and if

one lagged behind his neighbor he was prodded to increase his speed. Shortly the caravan reached the summit of a hill, and all gave a shout. They saw their native city and home, and felt a safe return was assured. The animals also knew they were nearing home, and increased their pace.

Once inside the city walls the caravan moved much slower, as the main street was full of camels, donkeys and people. The rider of the white dromedary drew a sigh of relief, as all danger of robbery was past. He sat more erect on his beast, as he was proud he had made another successful trip to Jerusalem. The rider was known to many. "Has the price of dyes gone up?" asked one who was interested in that trade. "Is wool still in demand in the great city?" inquired a wool merchant. "Has fine linen advanced in price?" shouted a linen weaver. "What is the latest news in the metropolis?" inquired another who was keen to know the latest in everything. To all these and many other questions Joeser replied with a briskness that indicated he was a shrewd business man, and was informed concerning the latest news.

Not all in that crowded thoroughfare greeted Joeser with a kind word. Many did not like his master, and made unkind remarks. "There goes Joeser with well-filled bags of ill-gotten shekels," cried a young man. "Isaac is growing richer every day, and we are getting poorer. He is a hard master and pays small

wages," groaned an old man. "But he will rue the day he robbed us. He and his kind must be overthrown," and clenching his bony hands he passed on and muttered curses on the rich. Joeser disdained to notice the dissatisfied, and continued his way towards his master's home, which was at the farther end of the city.

The palatial residence of Isaac Akiba was known throughout the city as the House of Marble. The owner of this magnificent home had large dye works, he employed many weavers of fine linen and he possessed many acres of the richest vineyards. He was the richest man in the city, and a few said he was the meanest. The majority loved him for his charity and kindness. It was toward the House of Marble that Joeser followed the guard after he had directed the cameleers where to unload the camels. Arriving at the house, Joeser dismounted and entered the house.

"Slave, tell Isaac Akiba that his overseer has returned from Jerusalem, and is ready to make his report."

"I will, sir," and he acquainted his master with the news. He returned in a few minutes.

"The master wishes you to bathe and eat before you make your report."

"He is a good master," Joeser mused. "He has more concern about my comfort than the report I have to make. He does not thirst for gold like so many of

the rich do. May Father Abraham shower his blessing on him." And Joeser made ready for his evening meal. He did not enjoy the rich viands set before him, as he was impatient to see Isaac. Joeser had made exceptional good sales and made a number of advantageous purchases, and he was keen to acquaint Isaac with his dealings. Besides there was much news he wanted to impart to his master. Joeser went over his accounts once more to make sure they were in order, so he could make his report with dispatch.

He gathered his accounts and bags of gold and was about to enter his master's apartment, when he heard Isaac was at his evening devotions. Joeser was reminded that he had neglected his devotion, and he dropped his accounts and bags of gold, and, turning his face toward Jerusalem, he recited the Amidah. Having finished his devotion he entered the apartment.

"Peace be with you, Brother Isaac," was the greeting of the overseer.

"Peace be with you, and my heart is glad you returned safely."

Joeser observed his master was as kind as ever, but he lacked the spontaneous joy so natural to him.

"You are not well, Isaac; your words lack life, and the joy of living seems to have left you," looking at him closely.

"I am well, Joeser, but my mind is not easy."

"Business poor, or are the vineyards not yielding their usual crop?"

"No, no, business is good, and the vineyards are yielding abundant crops. There are other things that can make a man miserable besides the loss of gold and silver," and Isaac rocked to and fro with bowed head.

"True, there are many things more valuable than gold and of more importance than precious stones. But you have not told me your misfortune. Perchance I might be able to help or suggest a remedy if I knew your sorrow."

"I know you are generous and would help me if it were in your power to do so. But the greatest men in the world cannot help me," moaned Isaac.

"It would be presumption on my part to pretend to help you, if the learned of the land cannot alleviate your trouble. Still, the unlearned can be of assistance in the most unexpected time."

"You have been faithful for many years, Joeser, and you are ever eager to be of service to me. But, as I said, in this instant you cannot help. It will relieve my mind however to unburden my heart."

"Say on, master."

"You have been with me for more than a score of years, and we have been like brothers, which is as it should be for two men of the true faith. You remember when our daughter came to gladden our hearts,

and how we watched over her that she should be a faithful daughter of Israel. Her mother and I even hoped she might be the mother of the Comforter of whom Isaiah spoke. But all our hopes were dashed to pieces after we were convinced that she had an ailment that could not be cured."

"You did all it was possible to do; you neglected nothing that was for her comfort," Joeser said to comfort him.

"Did all, yes. You will remember, Joeser, that I went to every important physician from Damascus to Alexandria. But none could help her. I even went to see heathen physicians, and I consulted men who practiced any kind of healing. And the gold I spent in search of a cure would have enriched a man beyond avarice. But to no avail."

"All that you spent for your child, Father Abraham returned to you three-fold."

"Jehovah has blessed me with material things, but denied me what I want most. You well know that I give more than my tithe to the temple, and I offer the best and costliest sin offering. Did you attend to the sacrifice while in Jerusalem?" Isaac asked.

"Yes, Brother Isaac. I bought the fattest ox in the market, and Caiaphas slew him with his own hand. And when the smoke of the offering rose toward heaven, I prayed that Jehovah would remove the malady that afflicts your child."

"I am glad you were faithful in this duty, but Jehovah does not hear our prayer, and the sacrifices I offer do not appear acceptable to Him. What more can I do? I have gone many times beyond what the law requires, and built a synagogue for the people of Magdala. I see to it that the people have the law read to them and that the youth receive daily instruction. Nor am I a hard master, as you well know, and my charity is directed in more ways than one, as you are aware. All these things I do in the name of Jehovah, and yet He does not answer my prayer. Sometimes I wonder if He does not watch over Israel," Isaac said in despair.

"You must take fresh courage, Brother Isaac. Jehovah has not forsaken His people."

"Joeser, you know how we love her, and her one prayer is that she might be cured. But it is all in vain."

"Why are you so wrought up over her condition when it has been thus all these years?" Joeser asked.

"Her malady is getting worse. Today she had seven spasms, and each one seemed worse than the preceding one. Oh, to see the agony she suffers!" the father moaned. "And to think she must be thus afflicted when she has everything to make her life happy."

"I can not feel as keenly as you do, though I love her like a sister, and would give my right hand if that sacrifice could cure her. You said a while ago that

you have tried every means to cure her or to get relief."

"Yes, yes, I have done everything possible, and am ready to do anything that will be of the slightest help."

"You have not been to Jerusalem for more than a year, and do not know the latest news. Wherever you go in the city, in the market place, in the inns, or in the temple, men are gathered in groups and are discussing the same topic—the words and works of the new teacher."

"Is he a prophet, and where does he dwell?" eagerly interrupting.

"He does not pretend to be a prophet, but his teaching is simplicity itself, and, wherever he goes, the crowds surround him and believe on him."

"Who is this remarkable man and what is his name?"

"His name is Jesus, and he hails from Nazareth of Galilee."

"And what does he teach; is it a new doctrine?"

"Those that have heard him say it is a new doctrine; others say it is the old made plain. There is a division of opinion. All agree that his teaching is convincing, and as to his kindness and love for others, he exceeds the prophets and the great teachers of the law."

"That is all very interesting, but how would his teaching affect my child, who is subject to spasms?"

"He not only teaches, but he also cures the ills of the people."

"Is this hearsay, or have you positive proof?" Isaac asked eagerly.

"I have not seen him cure anyone, but I have seen a man who was cured by Jesus' power. You recall, when you and I were in Jerusalem, the miserable man by the pool of Siloam?"

"Yes, he was most wretched."

"One day the teacher came by the pool and healed the lame man. He now walks about the streets of the city a well man. And they say he healed many others, but I do not know them."

"He must be a remarkable man if he cured the helpless cripple by the pool."

"And is it not reasonable to suppose that if he healed the helpless cripple, he can heal your daughter?"

"True, very true," Isaac agreed, "but I would like to know more about him. I have been imposed upon so often that I have grown cautious:"

"As for being imposed upon, there is no danger; the man refuses all money and heals people out of pure love to help them."

"He truly must be a strange man if he heals men and refuses money for his services. It is so unusual

it is difficult to believe. What do the rabbis say of him; do they believe him to be a good man?" Isaac was eager to hear what men of learning had to say.

"The scribes and rabbis are not for him. He does not teach as they do."

"How can this be? You said he taught the Scriptures, and the rabbis do the same?"

"The difference lies in this: the rabbis lay stress on tradition and ritual; Jesus cares nothing for these things. He begs men and women to be in harmony with God."

"I see the difference," Isaac said, and there was a decided suspicion in his voice and manner. He could not accept anything that did not have the approval of the leaders of the Church. "Did you have an opportunity to speak to Caiaphas and learn what he thought of the man?"

"He had very little time to give me. You understand he has many duties, and his time is taken up. He did send his thanks for the gifts, and hoped you would come to Jerusalem in the near future so that he could thank you in person."

"To return, what do you think of the man? You heard both sides, those who have faith in him and those who have not."

"I have not had an opportunity to see or hear him. But if I may judge by the works he has done, I would say without hesitating he was sent by Jehovah."

"We need a great teacher to arouse the Church. The people have lost their vision. They have forgotten that they are the chosen people of God."

"The indifference of the people in reference to their spiritual life is only too apparent. What we have in mind, however, is whether the man who has healed others can heal your daughter."

"How am I to decide? I do not know anything about the man, more than what you told me."

"Are you willing to see if he can help her?" Joeser asked. He saw Isaac hesitate because the man's work was not endorsed by the Church authorities.

"Wait until to-morrow, I will then give you an answer. Joeser, think of it, my only child in the full bloom of womanhood, surrounded by every comfort, educated by the best chazzan, and yet, with all her accomplishments and wealth, she is not espoused. When she was a child I looked forward to the day when the laughter of her children would make my house a house of mirth. This pleasure does not seem to be for me. But if this man can heal her, I will reward him so handsomely that want will never knock at his door."

"Your burden is not a light one, but you must not forget there are many whose burden is even heavier. So take comfort in the thought that the man may help her. What need you care if the Pharisees are for or against him, so long as he can be of help to Mary."

"Your counsel is always helpful and on the morrow I will acquaint Mary and her mother with all you said."

"Do you want my report?" Joeser asked when there was a pause in the conversation.

"Did you gain or lose?" Isaac asked.

"I made good sales and a number of profitable purchases."

"That is all I want to know for the present. You did your duty, as you always do, and in a day or two we will go into the matter in detail," and dismissed him. "Just a moment, Joeser," Isaac said before the overseer was out of the room. "Do you know where the teacher can be found if we want to see him?"

"We halted outside of Tiberias at midday, and Zadok, the coppersmith of Caesarea Phillippi, came up and stopped with us. He said he heard this morning from a traveler from the west that Jesus was in the southern part of Galilee, not far from Nain."

"Then it would not be difficult to find him if we went in search of him?"

"Not at all."

"Peace be with you for the night, Joeser."

"May rest of body and comfort of mind attend you during the dark hours," and Joeser left for his own house.

Isaac went to the upper room to weigh the things Joeser had related. "How is it I have not heard of

this man, if he is such a wonderful teacher? Am I interested so much in my own affairs that I am out of touch with the outside world?" he reproached himself. "I must know this man and learn what he is teaching. Ah, if he really has the power to heal like the prophets of old and he would heal my daughter, how happy I would be! I would never cease to praise Jehovah," and a new hope welled up in his heart. "We shall see what the new day brings forth," and with that he retired to his chamber.

After the morning meal the family went to the synagogue, as was their daily practice. They heard a portion of the Scripture read and a few Psalms chanted. The father was unduly silent during the service, and the wife feared Joeser had brought bad news or had made a poor trade while in Jerusalem.

"Father," said Hannah, his wife, on their way home, "you are so quiet this morning, is anything amiss?"

"Nothing in the least, mother; I am entertaining high hopes that happiness will visit us in its fullest measure."

The mother immediately thought some young man had asked for her daughter in marriage. But she as quickly dismissed the idea, as she had heard rumors that the people said her daughter was possessed with an evil spirit, and the most reckless youth would not ask for her daughter.

"And what is this good fortune, father?"

"I will acquaint you with it directly," he said as they entered the court of the House of Marble. Isaac called Tobia, the slave. "We are going to the upper room and are not to be disturbed, no matter who wants to see me."

"Your wish shall be obeyed, master."

The three went to the upper room, and after they were seated on soft Eastern rugs, Isaac began to relate with an eagerness that was unusual for him what Joeser had told him.

"Joeser, as you know, returned yesterday from Jerusalem, and it was a successful trip. He also brought the latest news from the Temple City. The one topic of discussion is the man who goes about teaching and healing the people."

"Do you think it possible?" Mary cried.

"I do not understand what you allude to," Isaac said.

"That this man might be the long-looked-for Messiah. You know the Scriptures tell us He will bring a comforting message and will heal the people of their diseases." and the daughter's face glowed with happiness.

This was a new idea; he had not thought of the man as the possible Messiah, and Joeser had not spoken of him in that respect. The suggestion made him

hesitate for a moment, but he quickly dismissed it, as he did not think it probable.

"Oh!" Mary exclaimed, "do you think he can heal me?"

"I know not, my child. We have traveled many miles and consulted many physicians, but to no avail. And yet this man who does not make any pretensions may be able to help you, or are you weary of going to helpers?"

"No, no, father, I am not tired or discouraged. I will go anywhere or do anything to get help, that I may be like other girls. This man's power may be the answer to our prayers."

"The God of Father Abraham will answer the prayer of His children, if they are only steadfast and faithful. I believe He can heal our daughter," the mother said with a confidence that is acquired by much prayer.

"Where can we see the teacher?" Mary asked, getting up and walking about the room. "Let us make haste and find him. He might leave for foreign parts and I would not be healed."

"Do not excite yourself, daughter," the father said soothingly. "I do not know where he is other than Joeser said he was not far from Nain. It will not be difficult to find him, if you are eager to see him."

"Do I want to see him?" she asked. "You know I would go anywhere to be cured or to get the slightest

relief. Tell Tobia to have a camel ready in an hour and I will start at once," with enthusiasm.

"Can you not send some one to see the teacher and ask him to come here?" asked the mother. She had fears for her daughter's safety.

"No, no, mother; if the cure is worth enjoying, I am sure it is worth going after."

"I agree with you, daughter, and I am glad you are not averse to visit the healer," said the father. "To-morrow you may go and seek him," the father said, and he tapped a brass gong at his side. In a few minutes Tobia entered the room.

"At your service, master."

"Go and tell Joeser I want to see him at once. Do not return until you have found him."

"Your will shall be done," said the slave and left.

For some time the three were silent. The father and mother were thinking of the future, and what might be if their daughter was cured. Mary was thinking how pleasant life would be if she did not have to dread the return of the spasms, and she repeated the Shema with deep fervency that she might be healed.

"Happiness to all," said the overseer as he entered the room.

"Oh, Joeser," Mary cried as she bounded to his side, "I want to go to the wonderful man you told

father about. Do you think he can heal me?" Mary asked, as though Joeser could answer the question.

"I know not, Mary," Joeser said kindly. "He has healed others, and I do not see why his power should be less efficient in your case."

"I know he will help me," she said with confidence.

"Joser," said the father interrupting, "I told Mary and her mother all you said concerning the man. Mary is keen to see him, and I can find no reason why she should not. No harm can come of it, if he can not relieve her."

"You came to a wise conclusion," Joeser said, "and I would not delay the going. He might travel to distant parts, and your search for him might be long and arduous."

"I have thought the same. Can you have everything in readiness to start on the morrow?"

"That is a small matter when the health and happiness of Mary are in the balance. What is it you wish me to do?"

"Mary will take her maid servant. Two tents will be needed, one for Mary and one for you and the guard. You think well of taking two of the guard?"

"There are unscrupulous travelers abroad that need to be guarded against. Now let me see, five or six camels will be necessary to carry what we need for the comfort of all," Joser said after a moment.

"You make the necessary preparations; you know what is needed," Isaac directed.

"And what time in the morning do you wish to leave?" Joeser asked, looking at Mary.

"Immediately after our return from the synagogue," Mary said.

"Everything will be in readiness by that hour," Joeser assured her and left the room.

The rest of the day was spent in getting ready for the journey. The servants and slaves hurried back and forth in the house, as each was eager to contribute something to her comfort. The prayer of all was that she might return healed of her malady, as they loved the daughter of Isaac.

Joeser led the camels into the courtyard at the appointed hour. In a few minutes all was ready for the journey, and the little train moved toward the south gate of the city. Outside the city wall Mary summoned Joeser to her side.

"Joeser, you know what I desire more than all else in the world, I, therefore, ask you to make a speedy trip. I am anxious to see the man and learn if he can help me or not."

"The man is in the neighborhood of Nain, I was told. Nain is more than a day's travel from here, and I do not think it advisable to attempt to make the journey in one day. If we did accomplish it, we would not reach the city until late this evening, and

we probably would not find the teacher. Besides, we would be exceedingly tired and in no condition to talk to the teacher. I think it the part of wisdom to travel more leisurely."

Mary was disappointed, yet she knew what he said was the right thing to do. "Perhaps that is the best plan," she said after a moment. "I know you will find him, and in the meantime I will curb my impatience."

"Thank you. You have never had occasion to complain that I did not do my duty for the good of all." And Joeser again rode to the head of the company.

Mary's mind was occupied with her mission, and she wondered what manner of man the teacher was. She thought of him as being clothed in the handsome and costly garments of the priests. He would be dignified in carriage, and people would hesitate to draw close to him. After reviewing the picture several times she thought that would not be appropriate. If the people were eager to hear him and followed him about, he would not be reserved, as people do not follow a man who keeps you at arm's length. Mary reasoned he must be the very opposite—he must be humble in spirit, or he would not help the poor and heal the sick. And as to his apparel, he probably would wear the simple garment of the people. Yes, she thought after a time, she would prefer to see him

in the simple garments, as he would look more like one of the prophets. These and similar ideas of the Master occupied her mind during the day.

The next morning they had their effects packed and loaded on the camels shortly after the sun was up.

"What time do you think we will reach Nain?" Mary asked Joeser.

"Shortly after mid-day, if all goes well."

"And have you heard, is the teacher somewhere near the city?"

"A traveler passed this morning and I inquired if he had heard of the teacher, and he said that day before yesterday the teacher and his company were crossing the plain of Jezreel and were going toward Nain. Fear not, Mary, we will find him."

"It can not be too soon. Let us make haste, I am more than anxious to see him."

"We will be in the city by mid-day. You see that hill toward the west, that is Little Hermon; on the other side is Nain."

"Then let us be going," Mary said.

Joeser again took his place at the head of the company. He was touched by the eagerness of the girl, and he gave command that the cameleers urge their beasts to a quicker step.

As they commenced the ascent of Little Hermon and her journey probably was nearly at an end, Mary asked herself how she should address the teacher and

make her malady known. She was apprehensive lest she would not approach him worthy the daughter of Isaac Akiba. Her meditation was interrupted by the sudden halting of the company. They had reached the crest of the mountain, and they stopped out of sheer admiration of the view before them. In front of them was the fertile plain of Esdralon; a little further on was the Mediterranean Sea. To the right was the white-capped Hermon; to the left was Mt. Gilboa. The panorama is one of the most beautiful in Palestine, and one not to be forgotten. In the contemplation of the scene they forgot their errand for the moment.

"This is a beautiful view, but let us be going," Joeser said, the first to arouse himself.

In less than half an hour they reached the edge of the city. The place was deserted save for a few decrepit men and women who sat in front of their little houses and eagerly looked down the street. A little further down the street Mary saw a great commotion; all the people of the city seemed to have gathered in the street.

"The teacher must be in that crowd," Joeser said as he came alongside Mary. He felt he should be near her when the moment came for her to approach the Master.

"I believe that is he," and she moved uneasily on her beast.

"Do not excite yourself; I am told he is kindness itself," Joeser said kindly.

"Do you think we had better dismount?" Mary asked.

"I think it best," Joeser replied and stopped the camels.

They dismounted and approached the crowd that was moving up the street. It was not difficult for Mary, even at a distance, to see which was the Master. It was not his dress that distinguished him, as he was garbed like his companions. But there was a majesty native to the man that set him apart from his companions. Children ran in front of the oncoming crowd and looked at him with wondering eyes. And if one fell in the scramble to get out of the way, the teacher would pick it up and pat his head and with a kind word and gentle nod restore him to his companions. Mary saw that the crowd pressed about him and asked questions. Mary and her friends were now close enough that she could see his face and hear him talk. She had never seen a face so beautiful, and when he smiled his face lit up with a radiance that drew everyone toward him; and his eyes seemed to shed love on every object on which they rested. His face, fascinating as it was in its beauty, had a longing in it which seemed to say: "I wish others were as happy as I am." In her admiration for the man she forgot all she was going to say and was on the point

of rushing to him and throwing herself at his feet. The air was suddenly pierced with cries and wails. Mary hesitated as she recognized the cries belonged to a funeral procession. The next instant the professional mourners came out of a little side street, and the three crowds met. Considerable confusion followed.

"Make way and let the funeral pass!" a man cried who seemed to have authority.

"Who is being carried to their last resting place?" the teacher asked kindly.

"The widow Jacob's son. He was sick for a long time, and I am sure he was glad to be gathered to the bosom of Abraham," said the man who had shouted the order to make room for the procession.

"Is he a young man?" the teacher asked.

"He is young and was her only son. He was a kindly youth, and was loved by the people of our city."

At that moment the four young men who were carrying the bier on their shoulders came around the corner of the street. They halted because the people did not make room for them to pass.

Jesus saw the mother was bowed down with grief, and his compassion went out to her.

"Daughter of Abraham, do not weep."

"I cannot do otherwise. He is my only son and my sole support, and he was a good boy."

A silence fell over the crowd, and they wondered why he should be so interested in the woman. "Is it possible," they asked, "that he can restore him to his mother?" "No, he cannot bring him back to life, he is not a prophet," others said. The jostling of the crowd compelled the young men to put their burden on the ground. Jesus turned to the bier and uncovered the face of the young man. Some in the crowd moved away, as the teacher was unclean, having touched the body. Others, not having such delicate scruples, moved closer. The silence by this time had become intense, even the professional mourners ceased their wails.

The unspoken question was on every lip: "Can he restore him to life?"

Jesus looked at the youth a moment and then gently said: "Young man, arise!" When the words fell on the crowd, some were ready to laugh at the absurdity of the command; others were ready to believe he could raise him from the dead. But before many opinions could be formed the youth opened his eyes, and the next moment he sat up. The mother bounded to her son's side and embraced him and cried for joy. After being assured that he was really alive, she fell at the feet of Jesus and praised Jehovah. Jesus took her ever so gently by the arm and said to her: "Daughter of Abraham, arise and go to your

home and weep not. Rejoice with your friends that your son is alive."

Fear fell on the crowd, and they moved away from the teacher, as they knew they were in the presence of a man who was more than a teacher. Mary could not move; whether it was from fear or admiration she did not know. She did realize after a few minutes that the teacher and she stood alone in a large circle. The Master beheld the comely maiden and noticed the Tephillen on her wrists, which said she was a faithful daughter of the Church; and her handsome apparel spoke of her wealth. Apparently she had all that goes to make life pleasant, and yet she seemed anxious to speak to him.

"Daughter, is there anything I can do for you?" he asked kindly.

And before she knew what she was doing, she was kneeling at his feet.

"Arise, daughter of Israel," he commanded gently.

Mary stood up, but her trembling lips could not utter a word.

"What are you seeking, daughter?" he asked.

"Teacher," she said after she had partially collected herself, "I came to be healed of my malady. My father has consulted every physician of note throughout the country, and they could not help me. But I know you can heal me," fervently.

"And why do you think I can cure you?"

"I saw you bring the young man to life, and it will take less power to cure me. Refuse me not," pleadingly.

The Master saw the eagerness in the maiden's face and pitied her. "And what is your malady?"

"From childhood I have been afflicted with spasms, and the older I grow, the more severe and more frequent the attacks. Day before yesterday I had seven spasms. Say that you will remove them." She pleaded with an intensity that was pathetic.

"Have you faith that it can be done?"

"I believe, Master."

"Daughter, your faith is great, and it shall grow with the years. Go in peace; the affliction will not return."

That instant the dread which had haunted her from childhood rolled away. She was conscious that she was cured, and she felt like shouting for joy.

"Do not send me away, teacher."

"What further do you wish, my daughter?"

"I am anxious to hear you teach. I want to learn all I possibly can."

He did not answer for a moment.

"Is it asking too much?"

"No, it is not asking too much; if others would only ask for the same," and there was just a touch of sadness in his voice. "Where are you lodging?" he asked.

"We are camping and will spend the night on top of Little Hermon. The scene from there is beautiful. Do not deny me the pleasure."

"I am not alone; my disciples and my mother go with me."

"They are welcome, and all will be made comfortable."

A woman now joined them, and a lovelier woman Mary had never seen.

"Your mother?" Mary said, addressing the teacher, and before he could reply Mary embraced her, and from that moment they were friends.

"My mother," Jesus said, as he put his arm around her shoulders and looked at her affectionately. "And her name is Mary."

"And my name is Mary, the daughter of Isaac Akiba, of Magdala."

"I have heard of your father, and hope I may see him before long."

"You must see him soon; he will be anxious to reward you for having relieved me of my trouble."

"Mother," Jesus said, "you accompany Mary, and this evening I shall join you. The day is not far spent, and I must teach the people while it is day."

"Can I not stay?" Mary asked. "I have heard so very little of what you teach, and I am anxious to learn. Your mother can go with my maid servant and Joeser, and they can make ready for your coming."

Jesus looked at his mother, and she understood.

"Come," the mother said to Mary, "you shall have many opportunities to hear my son. The people are waiting to hear him," and with that they turned and went toward the top of the mountain.

"Joeser," Mary said, "you prepare the camp for the night and see that all is in readiness for the Master. Mary and I will walk."

Joeser understood and turned the little train toward the mountain.

"Mother, I am reluctant about going, as I am anxious to hear your son instruct the people."

"All who hear him and are willing to accept the truth are loath to leave him. The people in this city seem anxious to hear, and he must teach them while they are ready to listen. He may not come this way again," and Mary thought she detected a strain of sadness in her voice.

"Surely no one would hinder him from teaching the truth?" Mary asked.

"Some men hate the truth, and they would resort to most anything to stop him."

"But he who upholds the love of Jehovah will triumph." Mary said with emphasis. "So the chazzan taught me, and the rabbis say the same."

"That is very true," the mother said, "but if one has profound convictions, the opposition is all the greater. Chastened men will resort to any means to

suppress the teaching that is unpleasant to them, though that teaching may be divine. But let us put aside the things that bring unpleasant suggestions, and think of the good and pleasant things in the world," the mother said.

Mary could not comprehend why any one should oppose the good in the world. She was clever enough however not to continue the conversation in that strain.

The two walked leisurely and in silence up the hill. Mary was thinking of her experience, and her spirit bubbled over with joy that she was rid of her trouble. She again and again gave thanks to Jehovah that she was free. The mother saw the joy that had taken possession of the maiden, and her heart was made glad that the young woman believed in her son.

When they arrived at the camping place Joesser had the two tents ready, one for the women and one for the men.

"I see you are tired," Mary said after she had made her guest comfortable, "and I shall leave you alone until your son joins us."

"And you want to be alone?" the mother said.

"Yes, so much has taken place in the last few hours I want to think it over."

"It is well that you should be alone and meditate on what you saw and heard."

"And experienced," Mary hastened to say.

"Yes, daughter, that is really more important than what you saw."

The mother rejoiced that Mary had the proper appreciation of the healing that had been done for her.

Mary left the little camp and walked along the brow of the mountain. The man and what he had done for her Mary rehearsed again and again. She could not explain how he effected the cure, but she was certain that she was healed, and the fear of the spasms was gone. For the first time since her childhood her mind was at ease. She could not explain anything of the transaction, but she was happy and felt like shouting because she was certain. Her one wish was that her father and mother were there that they might rejoice with her. The teacher must come to her father's house at once, and he would be richly rewarded. Her reflection was interrupted by the sound of voices. The Master and his disciples were coming up the mountain. Mary hastened back to the camp that she might welcome her guests.

"I am glad you are here," Mary said very simply.

"Is everything ready?" addressing Joëser.

"All has been done for his comfort," Joëser said, and led the Master and the disciples to the tent.

The sun had buried itself in the sea when the Master came out of the tent. They sat down on silken rugs in a semi-circle, and when each guest was served the Master asked a blessing. The prayer was not like

she had been taught or heard the rabbis repeat in her father's house. The Master's prayer was short and simple. And yet there was something in the homely words that stirred the heart. Mary was so affected by the prayer that she forgot for the moment that she was the hostess.

The Master led the conversation and all joined in one way or another. All felt perfectly at ease.

"You said your father's name was Isaac Akiba, of Magdala," Jesus asked Mary.

"Yes."

"Is he the dye manufacturer and linen weaver?"

"Yes, and do you know him?" Mary asked eagerly.

"No, I have not the pleasure of his acquaintance, but I have heard many good things of him."

"My father desires to deal justly with all men."

"So should every son of Abraham, but so many forget that they are the chosen people, and are as dishonest as those who do not know our God."

"Jooser is my father's overseer and he makes frequent trips to Jerusalem. It was through him that we heard of you and the good you are doing."

"And what do they say about me in Jerusalem," addressing Jooser.

"All Jerusalem is talking about the amazing things you have done and said. From the things I heard and the evidence of your work I felt you could help her whom we love, and I was not mistaken."

"Is the news you heard friendly or otherwise?"

"The people look upon you as a teacher sent from God. The priests, however, do not like you."

"It is my teaching they do not like. Men who prefer to dwell in darkness hate the light."

A company of people was approaching the camp; they were eager to hear the Master again.

"John," Jesus said when he saw the people, "I am weary. You go and instruct them." And John left at once to obey the wish of the Master. This was an opportunity for the rest of the apostles to leave, as they were anxious to discuss the raising of the widow's son. It was the first time they had seen the Master bring one to life, and they marveled as much as the people at the power of Jesus.

"My son, you must retire for a while and rest," the mother said with concern.

"I must work while I have the opportunity. I must teach while men will listen."

"You must not constantly think of your enemies. They may change their attitude after a while," she said, trying to comfort him.

"Yes, mother, many will change their minds after they have wreaked their vengeance on me," and there was a decided sadness in his manner.

The conversation of the two was foreign to Mary.

"Master," said Mary after she could no longer restrain her eagerness to know more of his teaching,

"if you are not too weary will you explain what you meant, 'men who dwell in darkness hate the light!'"

"The man who has murder in his heart does not want it known or seen; the man who steals hides it from his neighbor; the man who is dishonest does not want his fellowman to discover it. Such a man seeks darkness to hide his deeds. But the man who loves is not ashamed to let his neighbor see it; the man who is charitable is not ashamed of his charity; the man who worships the Father does it openly. The deeds of the former are deadly to his fellowmen, hence he seeks darkness; the deeds of the latter are helpful to his neighbor, and he does his work in the light. In other words, the man who follows his evil inclinations wants darkness that he may injure and destroy and not be seen in his evil doing; the man who follows his good impulses wants light that all may see his works." Jesus paused for a moment. "Have I made it clear?"

"You have," Mary said, and she was no longer amazed that the crowds followed him. His teaching did not have the stilted formality of the rabbis, but it was simplicity itself, and all could understand.

"Why do the priests of the temple dislike you? They are the chosen of God, and should be the first to accept your teaching."

"You have been to the temple?" Jesus asked.

"We attended the feast every year with the exception of the last two years. Father did not think it:

advisable for me to make the journey. When we did go we stopped for a number of years in the home of the high priest; he is an intimate friend of my father."

"You have been taught by the chazzan to have the highest respect for the high priest, and this is proper. You have also been taught that he is God's representative, which he is supposed to be. You therefore looked for a man different in character and spirit from other men, and you had a right to expect this. But when you were introduced into the home of the high priest, what did you discover? Did he live in an humble dwelling, or was it in a palace that rivaled the palaces of the rulers? Was his house comfortably furnished, or was it on a scale that it was the envy of the rich? Did he live on frugal fare, or was his table burdened with the luxuries from foreign climes? Did you see him dispense comfort to the poor? Did he show sympathy toward his neighbor? Did his life radiate love, as you expected a life would that you supposed was closely linked with Jehovah?"

Mary did not answer, as she could not recall that the high priest or a member of his family showed charity toward their neighbor; and as for the poor, they were not mentioned in her hearing. Mary did remember there was slight friction in the palace, which made you feel uncomfortable. She also recalled the unpleasant looks exchanged by the members of the

family. And she was amazed that this mild hate existed in the home of the man who held so high an office and to whom the people looked for spiritual guidance. Mary was confused, and Jesus divined her confusion.

"You are reluctant to think of the priest as a man who prefers darkness. You do not understand now, but a little later your eyes will be opened to the real character of the man," Jesus said, but there was no trace of anger or hate in his voice.

"I have been taught to hold the priest in reverence. But I have seen many things that I considered strange for a priest. Master, do you think it possible for all to live in the light of which you spoke?" Mary asked, and her manner indicated she desired to know more about the light.

"The Father wants all to live in the light. And He is grieved when men do not, and He is especially grieved when His appointed servants disobey."

"Then you think Father Abraham is interested in every man?"

"My daughter, when I say Father, I do not refer to Father Abraham, he is the father of Israel. I am thinking of our heavenly Father."

Mary was startled that any one should think of Jehovah as Father; such intimacy did not seem possible to her.

"You are amazed that I speak of Jehovah as Father,

and yet He is your Father and my Father. He is the Father of all who love Him," Jesus said kindly.

There was something convincing in the Master's words and manner that fascinated her.

"I reverence the name of Jehovah and I try my best to please Him. I attend the synagogue daily, I repeat the Shema three times a day and I forget not to say the Amidah thrice daily. I read the law frequently and the whole of the Scriptures twice a year. My parents are equally observant in their religious life, and lest we forget, we have the Mezuzzah placed above every door in the house. And yet I have not been taught to speak of Jehovah as Father. But I would like to," Mary said wistfully.

"I see, you have been taught by a strict Pharisee, and the law is an open book to you. Indeed, you know more about the Scriptures than many a scribe or rabbi. And yet, I am not surprised that you do not look upon Jehovah as your Father. You have not been taught this, because your teachers do not think of Him as Father, much less know Him as such."

"I observe the law to the best of my ability and perform my daily worship, but my soul is not satisfied. I do not know if my service is acceptable to Him or not. But I suppose this intimacy is not for the people other than His prophets?"

"All are prophets in Jehovah's sight, if we permit Him to rule and reign in our hearts."

"How is this done?" she quickly asked.

"You love your parents, and if they suggest that you do this or the other thing, you do not question their command. You obey their wishes, though at the time you may not know what the result will be. Past experience has taught you they would not ask you to do anything that would be harmful to you. So you obey them, and take delight in being obedient."

"I am obedient because I love my parents and it is commanded we should obey them."

"And they show their love for you. They are pleased because you are a dutiful child."

"Yes, my parents love me."

"Just as your parents love you, so your heavenly Father loves you, only many times greater. You must trust Him as you trust your parents, and He will manifest His love to you."

"That is what I want, teacher; the evidence that Jehovah loves me. How shall I know it? Where can I find it?" Mary cried in anguish. "You spoke to me this afternoon and all fear of my malady ever returning has left me. My mind and my heart are at ease. And I believe you can say the word and my soul will rejoice in a new joy, for I believe you are sent from God to heal both body and soul." And Mary looked at him with pleading eyes.

“Daughter, the Father heard your eager petition, and that which you seek is yours—peace of soul.”

As the words fell on her ears a something indescribably sweet enveloped her, and as the Spirit touched the deep chords of her soul she responded with a cry of joy—that which she had longed for she now possessed. Then a peace, which she thought could only be for celestial beings, settled over her spirit like a gentle dew and held her captive. She sat for a long time with bowed head and closed eyes, and she was afraid, that which was so comforting and satisfying might leave her if she moved. When she did open her eyes the mother was at her side and placed her arm around the maiden’s shoulders. In the deep twilight Mary saw they were alone.

“And where is the teacher?” Mary said with alarm. She was afraid it might all have been a dream, and she was anxious to know it was not.

“My son went apart to meditate, and the rest of the company have gone to their tent.”

“Mother,” Mary said, embracing her, “is the love of the Father not amazing? I did not think it possible to enjoy such a nearness of His presence.”

“His love is limitless, but we are so small that we can receive only a little portion of it.”

“Shall we go to our tent? I want to be quiet.”

The two women entered the tent and closed it for the night. The mother was asleep in a few minutes,

but Mary was too happy to sleep. She went over the experiences of the day again and again. Mary was glad that her malady was removed, but she found greater joy in the consciousness that she was adopted by the Father.

Little Hermon was bathed in sunshine when Mary awoke. She was alone. For the moment she could not place her surroundings, then the happenings of the previous day rushed upon her, and she gave thanks. The nearness of the Father was still with her, and her earnest prayer was that it would never leave her. Her pleasant thoughts were disturbed by the conversation of the company. When Mary came out of her tent all were assembled ready for the morning meal, and all were in a happy frame of mind.

"Your slumber was refreshing," the Master said when Mary joined the company, "and you are full of praise this beautiful morning."

"I can not help but praise Him who has done so much for me," Mary said with a beaming face.

"Our attitude should always be one of praise."

All sat down for the morning meal. The Master gave thanks for the things provided for the body, and commended the care of each in the hands of the Father. Mary had never heard such a beautiful prayer, and drank in every word. After the meal was over the twelve gathered their few belongings and bade

Mary and her friends adieu and took the road toward Nazareth.

"Where are you journeying to?" Mary asked the Master.

"We are going to Nazareth; it is a day's travel."

"I was in hopes you would come to Magdala to my father's house. I am anxious that he should know what you have done for me, and I am equally anxious that he should have a closer relationship with the Father."

"We will come to your city in five or six days, and I shall be pleased to enjoy your father's hospitality. And I shall also be glad to talk to him of things eternal."

The Master and his mother gathered their few belongings and made ready to go. Mary was silent all this time.

"Master, may I journey with you? There is much I want to learn."

"Daughter, we have not the comforts you are accustomed to, and our mode of travel may be irksome to you."

"I can endure the inconvenience, if you will only allow me to go with you. I will take one camel and a tent for your mother, if you will permit it."

"What of the rest; and are you not anxious to return home?"

"Joeser can return without me, and he can acquaint my parents with what he saw and heard."

"As you will, daughter."

Mary was overjoyed that the Master made her one of his company.

She gave Joeser a few instructions and ordered that Tobia, the slave, follow her with a camel and a tent. Mary was ready in a few minutes, and the three turned their faces toward Nazareth. They descended to the plain, and after an hour's travel Nazareth came in view.

"There is the old home, mother," Jesus said with boyish delight, "and back of the city are the same green hills where we used to go and watch the caravans go down the plain of Esdraelon. It was on those hills we used to study the law and read the prophets. Many a pleasant and profitable hour we spent there. And do you recall the sunset, how beautiful it was from the hills?" And he sighed, and a shadow flicked across the usually smiling face.

"Do you expect to visit your old retreat in the hills on this journey?" Mary asked.

"No, we have not the time. Besides, I must not tarry too long, as I am not a welcome visitor in my native city."

"And why are you not welcome among the friends of your youth?" Mary could not conceive how any one could dislike so noble a character.

"A man can teach anywhere and get a hearing—his friends, however, will not listen to him."

"Would they not believe what you taught?" Mary inquired.

"A few believed and the others refused to hear me. We are coming this way to see a few friends."

When they approached Nazareth toward evening a few friends of the Master and his mother came out to meet them. The people were not enthusiastic over his return, and as the Master went up the street not a few unkind remarks were hurled at him. "There goes the carpenter Joseph's son, who set himself up as a prophet," cried one. "He must be coming back to teach us the law," jeered another. "Jerusalem did not receive him as a teacher, and we were justified in rejecting him," hurled a third. These and many other unsavory remarks were hurled at the great teacher, but he did not heed them.

As the company continued on their way the Master saw an old man sitting in the doorway of his home. "Father Jacob," the Master said as he took the old man's hand, "peace be with you."

"And who are you?" the old man said, looking at him with dimmed eyes.

"I am Joseph the carpenter's son."

"My son, I am glad to see you. And how does the world receive you?" the old man asked in a quivering voice.

"Some believe, and others laugh when the bread of life is offered to them."

"Have patience, my son, The truth of our fathers will triumph. And those who will not hear you will regret it when the hour is passed."

"I pray, they will believe some day," and Mary again detected that shadow of sadness in his face.

"It can not be otherwise," said the patriarch.

"Peace and grace be with you until we meet again," said the teacher.

"I am getting old and may not see you again, but when we enjoy the rest in Abraham's bosom we can talk at leisure. Until that day have courage, my son."

The company passed on. Mary was surprised that the Master spoke to the old man, who seemed poor and alone. But Mary realized, since the abiding love came to her, that she, too, could love people that she did not love before.

"He worked in my father's shop when I was a boy. He is a good man, and we had many a profitable talk concerning the Scriptures," Jesus said to Mary as he observed she was interested in the man. During the evening and night the old man came to Mary's mind. "Perhaps he is in need. I wonder if I could help? I have more than enough, and why should I not share it?" Mary asked herself.

Early in the morning Mary made her desire known to the mother. "And do you think he would accept a gift? He appeared so good, and yet no one seemed to care for him."

"He has few kin, and they live in distant parts. He is worthy of your charity, as he is a God-fearing man, and I know he would not refuse your kindness." The mother was glad that Mary's love expressed itself so early in works.

"Tobia," Mary said, "you saw the old man the teacher spoke to last evening as we came up the street."

"He is a good man and loves the teacher" Tobia said. "I went to see him after I had stabled the camel. He says the teacher has a great mission and will launch a great movement. He is very poor, but happy."

"I too think him a good man. You take these two shekels and say a friend sent them. But do not tarry, as the teacher may want to leave."

"Jacob sends many thanks and his blessing. He said I should tell you to have perfect confidence in the teacher," Tobia said after his return.

"Jehovah will watch over him," Mary said. "See to it that everything is in readiness for the journey," Mary instructed the slave.

After Mary and her friends had departed, Joeser turned to the rest of the company: "Let us make haste and depart. We must reach Magdala before nightfall."

It was not necessary for Joeser to urge the men to make haste. They were as anxious as he to return and relate to their friends what they had seen and heard."

"Strange, strange," mused Joeser, as he urged his camel toward home. "I can not understand what I saw and heard, but I know it is true. Mary is healed, and a joy and peace surround her that is beautiful to behold. And I, too, feel that I am living in another atmosphere."

"What news? Where is my child?" Isaac cried, before Joeser had time to dismount.

"What news?" Joeser repeated. "Good news; the best in the world?"

"Where is my daughter? Speak, man, speak," Isaac said wringing his hands.

"Calm yourself, Brother Isaac, all is well. Mary is not here, but she will return in a few days."

"Did you see the teacher?" the father asked timidly.

"We saw the teacher, and he healed your daughter."

"Bless the Lord," Isaac said and raised his face toward heaven.

"But, Joeser, if Mary is healed, I fail to understand why she did not return and tell me the glad news herself?" with disappointment.

"Of course you do not comprehend, Brother Isaac, because you have not seen the Master. If I was free to do as I pleased I would not have returned myself. I would have accompanied him as Mary is doing."

"She is in the company of the new teacher?" with slight alarm.

"The teacher's mother travels with him, and she is the loveliest woman I have ever seen. She is kindness itself, and you cannot help being drawn to her."

"Tell me about the man; what is your opinion?" Isaac asked as he led the way into the house.

"If a man was ever sent by Jehovah to spread His truth, Jesus is that man," Joeser said after they were comfortable in Isaac's chamber. "He not only preaches a new gospel, but he also heals people and brings the dead to life."

"Are you sure he raises the dead?" he questioned Joeser's last statement.

"In the city of Nain the Master was coming up the street and we were going toward him. Just before we met a funeral procession came out of a side street. They halted because the street was full of people. Jesus saw the sorrow of the mother and made inquiries and learned the dead man was her only son. He

pitied the mother and told the young man to arise, and he did so. Brother Isaac, when you see and hear Jesus you feel that you are in the presence of a man whose power is unlimited."

"He must make one feel uncomfortable."

"The very opposite. He draws you to him, you cannot help but love him; and he inspires in you a desire to be better," Joeser said with assurance.

"I can not forget, Joeser, that Mary did not return with you. You say Tobia is with her and looks after her comfort. I know, Tobia will see to it that no harm comes to my daughter."

"Jesus, his mother and his disciples were Mary's guests last night. This morning Mary asked him to come to your house. He promised to do so, but he must first go to Nazareth. It will be two, or at the most three, days until he arrives, and then you can satisfy yourself if he is a man you can have confidence in."

"I shall be glad to see him; if only no harm comes to my daughter in the meantime."

"Fear not; after you see him and his mother, you will not ask why she did not return," Joeser assured him.

"I have confidence in your opinion and will anxiously await her coming. In the meantime preparation must be made for the teacher."

* * *

"Mother," Jesus said when they were ready for the journey, "it would give me pleasure to see our old home before we leave the city." The company turned in a side street and directly reached the house where Jesus lived before he entered his work. It was not a pretentious house.

"See, mother, there is the grapevine as big and fine as ever," Jesus said with enthusiasm. "And the fig trees are full of fruit, and the olive trees are healthy and will yield a fine crop. And the stone bench is still in its place under the tree where we used to read. They were happy days," Jesus said with the delight of a boy.

The mother loved the old home, and the happiest days of her life were spent there. "Yes, son, we spent many happy days here. but let us go; much of the charm is lost, as those who should love you hate you."

"We must forgive our enemies, as you taught me; and I do not bear any ill will. I saw the looks of contempt this morning and I heard the taunting remarks last evening. All this does not hinder me in my work. Some day they will understand, so I forgive them before they ask to be forgiven."

Mary did not understand the lofty spirit of the man, but she was glad she was in his company. To be near him was a benediction, and her life seemed to have increased four-fold since she knew him.

The company left the city and took the road to Cana. For some time the Master was preoccupied. But none remarked about it, as they understood him. After a time he entered into the conversation as though he had not been interrupted. As they approached Cana a number of the people came out to meet him. They were eager to hear him, and he asked and answered questions as they walked along the road. When they came into the village the Master taught the people and healed many of their infirmities. He spoke to them until late in the evening, and when the people returned to their homes, many gave expression to their feelings in songs of praise. Mary missed none of his teaching, and marveled at the good he was doing. They were so eager to hear him that the next morning they followed him several hours' journey before they returned to their homes.

The company was traveling toward Magdala, and Mary was anxious they should reach the city before night. Two hours' journey from Magdala Mary saw a rider coming toward them and leading a camel not having a burden. As the rider drew near, Mary recognized him as one of her father's servants.

"Where are you going, Obed?" Mary asked.

"Your father sent me to meet you, and this camel is for the teacher, as he must be weary."

"My son," Jesus said, "I am not weary and shall continue the journey on foot. My friends desire me

to talk to them, and I can not do so unless I walk. Return to your master and say I shall lodge in his house this night."

The servant looked at Mary.

"It is the Master's wish," she said, and Obed returned to the city, though he was disappointed, as he saw that Tobia, his fellow servant, had much to say to him.

The news had spread that Jesus was approaching the city, and when he entered the gate the crowd pressed about the teacher and his progress was slow. He finally reached the House of Marble, and the master of the house welcomed his daughter's return and bid the teacher enter.

"Peace be with you and your house," Jesus said as he came into the courtyard of the house.

"Father!" Mary cried as she threw her arms around his neck. She was a changed Mary from a few days ago; just how she was changed he did not know, and the father gazed at her a moment.

"I am not the same Mary," she said seeing her father's questioning look. "I am healed and my soul is at peace with the Father; I am His child. And this marvelous change was brought about by the teacher," and she led him to the Master.

"How can I thank you for having done so much for my child?" Isaac said as he greeted the Master.

"Your daughter had faith, and all things are possible for those who believe, and my joy shall be multiplied if you believe as she did."

"I do not understand all you say, but you must tarry, and we can talk about these marvelous things later. The evening is advancing and you must be weary. All things are ready for your comfort and the evening meal will be ready shortly." And he led the Master to his chamber, where every comfort was provided.

Jesus asked a blessing for the bounties of God, and as the words of thanks fell from his lips Isaac was startled first that he did not use the prayer set down in the Talmud—believing Jesus was a devout Jew—and second he was amazed with the real thanks that Jesus gave. There was a life and reality in the words of Jesus that the set prayer of the rabbis lacked.

Isaac asked the teacher many questions.

"I see, you know the law, Friend Isaac, and our conversation is pleasant and profitable. But the people are waiting for me, and we can talk later in the evening."

"Do not allow me to interrupt your work. I am glad the people are anxious to hear you. We can talk at leisure."

When Jesus came out a quiet fell over the crowd. Some were quiet because it was the first time they had seen the much-talked-of man; others ceased talk-

ing because they felt they were in the presence of a man who had powers such as no other man had; others again were quiet because they admired the dignity and manliness of the man, which said so clearly he was in close communion with God. And when he spoke to them they drank in every word. Never had they heard one speak so kindly; never had they heard the Scriptures expounded in such simple words. Every word seemed a word of life, and the hearts of all were touched.

Mary was busy everywhere while Jesus was talking. She went about in the crowd and saw to it that as many as possible got near the teacher to hear him. It was not long until the court and the porch of the great house were filled to overflowing. Mary then went outside and assured the rest that some other time they should hear the Master. Mary was happy in her work, as she felt she was doing work for him who had done so much for her.

"Mary!" It was the voice of a woman, and it was a weary voice.

"What is it, mother?" Mary saw in the half-light the speaker was a woman. She was sitting against the wall of the house and a boy was in her lap.

"I heard the great teacher healed you and that he is in your house tonight. I carried my son from the other end of the city with the hope he would heal him. When I arrived I could not get near him for the press

of the crowd. Now I must carry him home again, and he is not healed. He is heavy, and my strength is spent." And the woman bent over her son and wept.

"And do you believe he can heal your son?" Mary asked.

"He healed you, I am told, and I had hopes he would restore my son. Or does he only help the rich?" the woman asked after a pause.

"He does not ask if you are rich or poor. Come," Mary said, assisting the woman to arise. "You shall see the teacher," and Mary led the way to the other side of the house, where there was a door. In a few minutes Mary and the woman were standing back of the Master. He paused for a moment and Mary touched his mantel. The Master turned.

"What is it, daughter?" when he saw who touched him.

"This woman carried her sick child from the other end of the city with the hope of seeing you. When she came here she could not get in for the crowd. I brought her to you, knowing you would make her happy."

"Your faith is growing, Mary," and he gave her a smile of approval.

He turned to the woman and saw she was a victim of social oppression, and the emaciated child in her arms excited his pity. He saw the woman longed for

help and he had compassion on her and gave her courage to speak.

"He was born lame," the woman said. "I did all I could for him, but the physicians said he could not be cured."

"And why did you bring him to me?"

"You have healed others, and I know you can restore my son."

"Do you believe?"

"Yes, I believe you are a teacher sent from God and can heal my boy."

"According to thy faith so be it done. Stand the boy on his feet and lead him home."

The crowd pressed closer; they were eager to see if he could heal the boy. The woman obeyed the command of Jesus, and the child stood on his feet. When the mother saw he was healed, she fell at the Master's feet and praised God.

"Arise, go to your home and the blessing of the Father go with you."

Those nearest the Master were awed at what they had seen, and the word passed from mouth to mouth that a miracle had been performed. Those in the crowd that had infirmities of any kind pressed forward and desired to be healed. There was considerable confusion after a time, as those who were healed gave expression of their appreciation in different ways. Some shouted for joy, others sang and praised God and

others cried because relief had come to them. When all were healed the hour was late and the torches in the different parts of the court were burning low, and the Master bid the people retire to their homes.

Isaac was a keen observer and noted all that transpired during the evening; and he was astounded beyond words. "Might he be the Messiah?" the suggestion came to Isaac. "He is to do mighty works, and I do not see how any one could do greater work. No," he said to himself, "he cannot be the Promised One, as He is to sit on David's throne and rule the nation. This man, good and noble as he is, does not claim to be David's son. He is only a traveling rabbi with a few companions," Isaac concluded.

"Friend Isaac," Jesus said, "this has been a hard day, and with your permission I will seek the quiet of my chamber."

"I see you are tired, and rest will be welcome," Isaac said.

"You desire to converse with me," Jesus reminded his host, "and I shall be pleased to talk with you on the morrow. You understand, we sometimes grow so weary that we cease to be interesting."

"Much as I want to talk with you, I do not want to tax you. May your sleep be refreshing," Isaac said when they reached the guest chamber.

"Peace be with you this night," Jesus said as he left his host.

Isaac, however, was not weary and went to the upper room to meditate on things he had seen that evening. He had entertained other men who were prominent in different walks of life, and their company gave him pleasure. But this man, who had to be invited, imparted something that touched the deepest nature of his being, and he was at a loss to account for the peace that had come to him. After several hours' reflection he too felt weary and went to his chamber.

The next morning Isaac and his guests went to the synagogue. Jesus was invited to read and expound the Scriptures, and he did so to the profit of all, and when he sat down the elders asked him to continue.

"It is not well to talk too long. Ponder over what you heard and practice the same, and you will draw nearer the kingdom," Jesus said and left the synagogue.

After they returned to the house and refreshed themselves, Isaac said: "It is necessary that I look after my business, and I shall be pleased to have you go with me."

"I shall be glad to accompany you. I do not know how dyes are made, and I have often wondered how it is done."

When they reached the place of business Isaac explained how some of the dyes are made from shells, others from the bark of trees and still others from

flowers. It was all very interesting to Jesus, and he asked many questions.

"I will now show you how linen is made," Isaac said, and he took him to the warerooms, where the flax was brought in from the fields nearby and from distant parts. He showed him how the flax was crushed, how the thread was made and finally how the linen was woven. Isaac was proud of his business, and explained it in detail to the Master. Jesus expressed interest in all that he saw, but with it all, Isaac felt that Jesus had some comment to make, and he was keen to hear it if it helped him in his business.

"I have not been out to my vineyards and orchards for several days, and I should like for you to see them." Jesus assented, and Isaac called Joeser to order two camels that they might ride.

A short distance outside the city Isaac pointed out his vineyards and the different grapes and mentioned the yield per acre. "That olive grove is mine, and that orchard of fig trees is also mine. The trees are healthy and have been profitable this year," Isaac said proudly.

"You have many possessions, Friend Isaac," Jesus said as they returned.

On reaching the House of Marble, Isaac and his guest retired to the upper room, where the breeze was pleasant and they could converse without being disturbed.

"Friend Isaac," Jesus said, "you are a good business man, and you are to be commended in the way you manage your affairs. Did you found the business?"

"My grandfather made dyes on a small scale, my father enlarged the dye works and added the weaving of linens. When I came in possession of the business I expanded both departments. But I have no son to leave the business to; Jehovah has seen best not to bless me with a son," sadly.

"You are proud of your achievements, which is right. Your business is a model one, and your broad acres are productive because of your management. What is your aim in doing all this?" the Master asked, looking at Isaac.

This was an unusual question, and Isaac was not ready with an answer.

"My business grew because I paid strict attention to it," he said after a moment. "And I feel that I owe it to my fellow man to continue it, as many are dependent on my business for a living."

"Your consideration for others is a splendid trait, but you have possessions far in excess of what you and yours can use. And yet you bend all your energy to accumulate more."

"My shekels are increasing because I am diligent in business. As far as making use of them in a personal

way, that is impossible. In truth, I sometimes get weary of doing business."

"Did you ever think of giving more to the men and women who work for you?" Jesus asked.

"No, I have not thought of paying more. I pay as much as other men in the same line of business, and see no reason why I should pay more."

"You are not compelled to pay more than others, but you are so far removed from want that I thought you might find pleasure in giving more to those who labor for you. Do you think they would be happier if you increased their wages, and do you think your pleasure would increase if you helped others?"

To derive pleasure from increasing the wages of your help was a new idea to Isaac.

"I have not tried what you suggest, therefore I do not know if it would give me pleasure or not," Isaac said.

"After all, Friend Isaac, all that you have is given you in trust, and some day you must give an account of your stewardship. You are not given wealth simply to use it for personal ends."

"The idea is so different from what we are taught and practice that I must have time to think it over. I do not want you to think, teacher, that I am not charitably inclined. I give more than my tithe to the temple and I do much for the poor of our city," Isaac said in self-defense.

"What you do is very commendable, and what I said you are not compelled to do, as your help probably is satisfied. But they have been in your service for years and helped you to accumulate your wealth. If you increased their wages they might appreciate it and be better workers. Besides you might find a pleasure you are a stranger to now."

"You must return to my house some future day, and in the meantime I will think it over and probably give it a test."

"Let your love for your friends have control of your actions, and you will find spheres of happiness now unknown to you."

"We miss many of the best things in life because we do not know how to apply ourselves."

"Well said, Friend Isaac, and you are seeking the better things in life."

"Such is my desire."

"The sun is sailing toward midday, and we must resume our journey," Jesus said.

"You are not going to leave today?" Isaac said with surprise.

"Time is passing and I have much to do. I can not tarry too long in one place."

"You must return before many days."

"Teacher," Isaac said, returning from a chamber to which he had gone a few minutes before, "you do not know how thankful I am that you healed my

daughter. It was my intention to present you with a gift that would place you outside your home for the rest of your days. But I have learned that you help people because you love them, and that you do not accept their gold. I have here a seamless tunic made of the finest linen. It was ordered by Pilate of Caesarea, and it would give me pleasure if you would accept it, as you are more worthy to wear it than he is."

"I accept your gift, Friend Isaac, it is especially welcome, as my tunic is well worn."

The company was assembled in the courtyard and ready to leave, when Isaac saw his daughter prepared for a journey.

"Mary, where are you going?" the father asked with surprise.

"I am going with Jesus," Mary said as unconcerned as though she were going to walk to the end of the street with a friend.

"I do not understand why you want to go."

"I want to learn more of the teachings of the Master. Besides, Jesus' mother needs company, and I want to be with her. Do not say, father, that I can not go." pleading.

Isaac looked at the teacher in a questioning manner.

"Mary," Jesus said, "we often do not know where we shall stop for the night, and not unfrequently we

sleep under the open sky. And sometimes our fare is meager. Can you endure all this?"

"Master, refuse not my going," Mary pleaded. "If mother can undergo the privations, I surely can as well. Besides, Tobia has the camel and two tents, one for you and one for mother and I. We shall at least have a comfortable rest at night. I want to go," she said earnestly. "There is much I can do to advance your teaching."

"Friend Isaac, all she says is very true, and I am glad she has a desire to work. She will be a companion to my mother, as I know she is lonely at times, when I am very busy. But I don't want to take your daughter away, as she is your only child and a great comfort to you."

"If she can be of help to you in your work she may go, and you must return to my house and bring her to us again. But tarry a moment," and Isaac went into the house. He came out in a few minutes, and Mary went to meet him.

"Daughter, I have a faint idea of what the Master is doing, and I am glad you want to go with him. Here are ten shekels of gold; use them as opportunity affords, and if you need more, return to your father's house."

Mary was so overjoyed that her father did not object to her going that she fell on his neck and kissed him.

"Father, you do appreciate what the Master is doing?"

Without further adieu the company set out for Capernaum.

* * *

"Mother," Isaac said as they entered the house which seemed so empty. "the house is desolate without our girl, but if she can help to make Israel better we will make the most of our loneliness."

"We need to be aroused to our duty as a people, and the teacher is doing a remarkable work in that direction. You did not have much of an opportunity to speak to Mary. All fear of the spasms returning has left her, and she has received the quickening of the spirit and is conscious that God owns her as His child. She is exceedingly happy in her new life.

"That should be our aim, but we have no one to teach us," Isaac said sadly. "But when the great Deliverer comes we shall be taught, and the things that are hidden now will then be made clear."

"Isaac," Hannah said in a whisper, "did it occur to you that the teacher might be the long-looked-for Messiah?"

Isaac was startled that his wife should have the same idea that had presented itself to him. "Yes, I did think of him as the Messiah, but he is not the long-looked-for consolation of Israel. We are told that:

He will come as the King of Israel, and surely he does not make any kingly pretensions."

"I know not," Hannah said, "but did you ever hear a man speak as he speaks, and did you ever see a man do the things he does? I can see why Mary was so eager to follow him. I too would not be averse to accompany him if it were not for my years."

"That he is a good man there is no question. But he suggests ideas I fear are not practical," Isaac said. "This morning after we returned from the vineyards he asked me why I was so anxious to accumulate money. I had no adequate reason other than I felt it my duty to society to continue my business. He said I had more than I could ever use, and asked if I thought it would give me pleasure to increase the wages of the men and women in my employ. He pointed out they had helped me to increase my wealth, and asked if I thought they were entitled to some of the gain."

"The idea is a new one, but you are inclined to do anything he suggests," Hannah said.

"Did you ever hear one who was listened to more attentively?" Isaac said to change the subject. "And every word he utters is a simple truth and makes you feel that you want to be better."

"I could live in his presence. It seems to me that where he is heaven must be," Hannah said as she

returned to her household duties and Isaac retired to the upper room.

The suggestion of the Master, that he increase the pay of his help, returned to Isaac, and he questioned what effect it would have. He reflected for a long time, and fears began to arise that it might not be a good plan, and possibly they would not appreciate it. No, he would not try the experiment. But the suggestion of the teacher would not leave him. "I will put the idea to the test," he finally said, and with the resolve came a satisfaction of mind he had seldom experienced. He went at once to his place of business and ascertained from Joeser what each employee was getting.

"Joeser," Isaac said after a time, "beginning with tomorrow each man and woman is to receive one-third increase in their pay.

The overseer looked at him in astonishment. He knew his master was liberal on occasion, but this increase in wages was out of the ordinary.

"You seem surprised that I want to do this?"

"I am; it will mean several shekels increase each week, and will the business permit it?"

"You seem surprised at my spontaneous generosity?"

"It is out of the ordinary, but you are master of your affairs."

"The Master suggested that I should do it. He pointed out that you and the rest of my employees helped to increase my wealth. And he asked if I thought they were entitled to more than mere wages. I had decided against the idea, but the suggestion would not leave me. I am going to put the idea to the test."

"Brother Isaac," Joeser said with emotion, "if the teacher has that conception of your business, it must be feasible, or he would not have mentioned it. All that I have ever seen him do or say was for the betterment of his fellowmen. Isaac, he is the greatest man Israel has ever produced, and he will leave his impress on the world."

"You have an excellent opinion of him."

"That is because I have seen more of him than you have, and probably see him from a different angle."

Isaac would not commit himself as to his views of the Master. "You put the suggestion into force to-morrow and watch the result," Isaac said and left for his home.

"The idea is a new one," Joeser said, "but I am sure it will produce good results, as the teacher advanced the proposition."

The next morning Joeser went through the different departments and announced the increase in wages. The workers were surprised beyond measure. The news had a stimulating effect; and those who hereto-

fore lagged behind were now ashamed to do less than the others; and those who had done good work did even better. There were many comments among the workers, and some made plans how they would use the extra money. Old men who made a bare living had hopes of laying a little aside so they would not be entirely dependent when they were unable to work.

Isaac tarried in his home, as he desired the idea tested before he returned to his business. Besides, he had an intense longing to study the Scripture and learn if the teacher might be the Promised One. He not only studied the Scriptures, but he also read the opinions of the learned rabbis. But the more he read, the greater was the confusion of his mind. The question had to be settled that he might enjoy peace of mind. There was only one course left, he must consult a rabbi.

At the end of two weeks Isaac went to his place of business to see how the new plan worked out.

"Joeser, has the increase in wages proved a success?"

"It has, Brother Isaac, in fact, the results are beyond my expectation. It was the best investment you ever made. The men made more dyes in the last two weeks than they did formerly in three weeks; and the same is true of the spinners and weavers."

"Joeser, you keep an accurate account of the material turned out, and if they do the same amount of

work in the next two weeks as they did the last two weeks, you increase their wages another third."

"You are not overdoing it?"

"We shall see."

Isaac went through the different departments, and many of the workers expressed their appreciation. The thanks were so genuine and the attitude to please so evident everywhere that he was glad he had increased their wages.

"It surely was a good investment, and the teacher was right," he said to himself.

"Joeser," Isaac said when he returned to the accounting room, "what do you think of the teacher? Has it occurred to you that he might be the Messiah?"

"I have asked myself the same question. I am not learned in the Scriptures, but what little I do know, I would say he is. I consulted our rabbi, but he evades the question. You can talk with him a whole evening, and he will not give you a definite answer. I sometimes think he has no opinion, and for a rabbi I do not consider him well versed in the Scriptures."

"Our opinions with respect to the rabbi agree. But I know a man who has an opinion and is considered an authority on the Scriptures—Rabbi Jehuda, of Tiberius."

"I have heard good reports of him."

"I want you to go to Tiberius on the morrow and bring him up. We are old friends, and he will not hesitate about coming."

"I will start early in the morning, and he shall be in your house by sunset tomorrow."

"You will make haste, I know," Isaac said as he left for his home.

The peace and quiet of the twilight hour were stealing over the city as Joeser and Rabbi Jehuda rode into the courtyard of the House of Marble.

"Peace be unto you, Brother Isaac," Jehuda said as he dismounted.

"Health and happiness attend you, Brother Jehuda."

"I want to speak to you about an important matter, but refresh yourself first."

The rabbi was flattered that Isaac should summon him to his house. His friend probably wanted his advice in reference to some Church work.

"And what is it you wish to communicate?" Jehuda asked when he returned.

"Let us go to the upper room, where it is cool and we can converse without being disturbed."

"Jehuda," Isaac said after they were comfortably seated, "have you heard of the new teacher who is going through the country and doing such wonderful work?"

"Yes, I have heard of him, but I have not heard him teach. I know who he is," Jehuda said indifferently.

"You mean to say, you know him personally?"

"Yes, I know him and I knew his father."

"And what do you think of him?"

"I shall speak of him as I knew him ten years ago. When his father was still living I called on him once or twice a year. Joseph was an intimate friend of mine. The young man was exceptional in many respects. He knew more about the Scriptures than many a rabbi, and his chief pleasure seemed to be to ask me questions. And to be candid, Brother Isaac, he could confuse me quicker than any man I ever met in verbal combat."

"From what you know of him, would you say he would make a good teacher?"

"I do, indeed. He could elucidate the Scriptures in such a clear and simple way that it was a pleasure to listen to him. And I think he understood the Scriptures better than any man I ever knew, not excepting the great teachers in Jerusalem. I would not say this to any one but you," he added.

"You surely have the highest respect for his ability. Where did he get his training? I am told his parents are poor."

"He received his training in the best school in the world—his pious mother taught him. She is a remarkable woman, and it is a benediction to be in her home."

"You knew him and his environments; did it ever occur to you that he might be destined for exceptional work?"

"I do not see that he is selected to do different than other men. He might be a great rabbi if he entered the priesthood."

"Did you ever think he might be the Messiah?"

Jehuda looked at his host several minutes in amazement.

"I have not thought of him as the Messiah," with slight contempt. "But for you, a ruler of the synagogue, to ask such a question astounds me. You must have forgotten all your early instruction."

"And why do I surprise you?"

"Do you forget that the Redeemer must be born in Bethlehem of Judea?"

"And so he was."

Jehuda had not known this, and for the instant was surprised.

"The Messiah shall sit on David's throne and rule the world."

"He does not sit on David's throne as yet, but you do not know what he may do."

"Brother Isaac, he shall be of the seed of David, and will be born in splendor. And when the time arrives for him to declare himself King of Israel, the nation will bow to him and accept him. The man

who will occupy that exalted place will be of the lineage of David, and he will have wealth to uphold the dignity of his office. The man in question is only a poor carpenter's son, and he could not enforce his claim to Messiahship if he made it. Friend, what made you ask such a question? Have you fallen under his power?"

"I have heard him teach, but I have never heard any one teach as he does. After you heard him you make up your mind to be and to do better. Nor have I ever seen a man who loves his neighbor as he does. And his love is not passive; but it goes out and heals men and forgives sin."

"I am surprised that you give his teaching countenance. Other men have taught in the same manner. There was a man by the name of John who taught and baptized along the river Jordan. Men flocked to him and they talked about him and his teaching. He became bold as his followers increased, but his boldness cost him his life. And I should not be surprised if the same fate awaited this man. As to his healing sick folks, that may be true, but there is nothing remarkable in that; others have done the same. No, brother, you want to dismiss the idea that he is the Messiah."

"All that you have said may be true. But I know he is the most extraordinary man I have ever seen. When you are in his presence you feel that you are in

the company of a man who has a tremendous hold on God. And the truth is so real to him that it is part of his very nature."

"Any man can acquire that state if he concentrates his mind on one thing."

"Possibly," with doubt. "But I have never seen it in our teachers. Perhaps they have not the time to study the Scriptures and get a firm hold on the eternal truths."

"Isaac, when the Messiah comes," in a tone of finality, "all men will flock to him—the people and the priests. The man in question has a few followers, but the authorities in Jerusalem hate him and are justified in their hatred. Did he not say that he would destroy the temple and raise it up in three days? Did he not say: 'The Father and I are one?' He has the unheard-of boldness to make himself equal with God, and this, as you know, is blasphemy and worthy of death. If he continues to pervert the people, the authorities will punish him. The people must not be led astray by a man who has a glib tongue and heals a few people. The Scriptures, tradition and the Church must not be desecrated, and the rulers of the Church will see to it that they are not destroyed."

There was silence between them for a long time, and Jehuda felt he had convinced his friend that the teacher was no person of moment.

"I did not say he was the Messiah," Isaac finally said, "I merely asked your opinion. One thing I do know, I never entertained a man who gave me greater pleasure, and no man ever left a better influence on my soul. As to his teaching, it certainly is different from that of the priests. We are taught that those who have much are superior to those who have little or nothing. We are not taught love and charity toward those who are in our employ. This man teaches that we should love those who work for us, and that they are entitled to more than a living wage, as they helped us to make our money."

"And does he expect you to apply this nonsense?" with contempt.

"He said I must not forget that all I have belongs to God, and that I am only a steward and must some day give an account of all I did."

"And you increased the wages of your help?" with sarcasm.

"I increased every man's wages one-third."

"And the result?" with a half sneer.

"It is the best investment I ever made. The help has turned out more and better work, and they are happier and have a love for me they did not have before. And what is more, I am happier; I feel for the first time that I am really helping some one and am of some use in the world."

"It is self-evident that it will be but a short time until you will close your business. It is impossible to conduct a business along those lines."

"We shall see. I did more than that. I gave them the second increase of one-third of their original wages."

"The man has an influence over you that has made you unfit to conduct your own affairs," with disgust.

"Simply because an idea is new and has not been tried is not saying it is wrong or impossible."

"I am sorry you have fallen into this error," Jehuda said.

He knew the rich oppressed the poor, and in his better moments his sympathy went out to them. But he made no effort to alleviate their condition, as he was avaricious himself. Hence he pretended that he was disgusted with all his friend said and did.

"And is there anything else I can do for you?" he asked carelessly.

"No, I have no further questions. But I think you would enjoy to hear him teach."

"You think I might become one of his followers," with disdain.

"No, I merely want you to hear him, and after you heard him, you might change your views."

If the sanhedrin reject him and denounce him as an impostor, it is my duty to abide by their decision, and not set myself above them."

"It might be well if we did our own thinking."

"I see my visit is not productive of good. I shall be pleased if you order my dromedary, and I will return to my house in the morning."

Isaac complied with his friend's wish. Hasty farewells were exchanged, and as the first signs of morning were visible, Jehuda departed.

"That a man of intelligence can be led astray so easily," Jehuda mused on his homeward journey.

"It is lamentable that our teachers have a hatred for those who bring love and health to others," Isaac said as he watched the retreating figure of his friend.

* * *

Jesus and his company rested a few days in Capernaum and then made a tour of the country northeast of the Sea of Galilee. The teaching of the Master was received with greater favor every day, and men and women left their fields and shops to follow him. Many believed on him and rejoiced in their new belief. The mother and Mary were busy looking after the comfort of Jesus and the twelve. But they found time to tell the glad news to many who were hungering for the truth. Mary was delighted with the work and the more she did the more she wanted to do, and her joy increased with her work. She not only helped those who were in spiritual trouble, but she also gave freely of her shekels to alleviate the want so prevalent on every hand. And it was not

long until she had used all her father had given her. Her work was so fascinating she could not stop it, but she must have more gold. She remembered her father's words and sent Tobia to Magdala, and her father did not disappoint her.

Five weeks after leaving Magdala the company were at the eastern shore of the sea. A great crowd was with him, and he had been teaching them since morning. After midday the question of food suggested itself to many. But this was no place where they could buy anything, and the disciples hinted to the Master that he send the people away before night came on.

"That would not be charitable," the Master said. "The nearest village is miles distant, and many would faint by the wayside. Is there no food in this great company?"

"I saw a boy a while ago with a few loaves and a few fishes," one of the apostles said, "but what is that among so great a crowd?"

"Bring the boy and his loaves," the Master said.

The twelve began the search for the boy, and in a short time brought him to the Master.

He took what the boy had and blessed it and told the twelve to give to the people.

The disciples dispensed the food, but their baskets did not contain less after they had fed many of the people. The apostles had not noticed that the food

was not diminished in their baskets, as they were too busy feeding the people. But there was one keen observer in that crowd who saw all that happened—Avaran, a direct descendant of Judas Maccabaeus, a man of wealth and influence in northern Galilee. At his heart gnawed the injustice of the Romans, and the dream of Avaran was to revolt and destroy the Roman power. He was ever looking for the opportune moment to execute his dream, and as he saw that the bread did not diminish as the people were being fed, an idea leaped into his mind and he made his way to the side of John.

“Where did you get the bread and meat to feed the people?” Avaran asked.

“The Master filled my basket and the baskets of the others and told us to feed the people.”

“I have observed you closely, and you have fed several hundred, but you have not refilled your basket. Tell me, how can you have so much food in one basket?”

John had not noticed that his basket was not emptying.

“I know not, unless the Master performed a miracle; in that event the supply would be unlimited.”

“Could he feed these thousands with a few loaves and a few fishes?” Avaran asked.

“He could if he so desired,” John said.

“Then our deliverance is at hand.”

"I do not understand you," John said, but Avaran paid no further attention to him.

"Ho, men of Israel!" Avaran shouted, "the great Deliverer is in our midst, and we did not recognize him. He can lead the hosts of Israel against our enemy and we will not suffer defeat—for he can feed an army with a few loaves, he can heal the wounded by his touch and the dead arise at his command. All who love Israel arise and we will make Jesus our leader, and after we have subdued our enemy we shall place him on the throne of David in the city of Jerusalem."

An hundred men sprang to their feet and made their way to the side of Avaran.

"We are ready to follow the teacher," they said.

Jesus made his way into the midst of the excited men.

"My friend," Jesus said, addressing Avaran, "I appreciate that you chafe under the Roman yoke, but the yoke cannot be removed as you suggest. You shall conquer the Roman power, but not with the sword. The Roman tyranny will be conquered with the love of the Father, as you exemplify that love in your lives."

"Love will not conquer a pagan Roman," Avaran said, disappointed.

"Friend Avaran," Jesus said kindly, and yet there was that subtle note in his voice that did not invite

further argument, "you are a man of influence and must not raise a disturbance, as the civil authorities will not tolerate it, and many innocent people must suffer."

"Then you will not lead us?"

"Not in the clash of arms. I want to lead you in love and kindness to all."

Without another word Avaran turned away and he directed the men, who came at his call, to return to their families.

Jesus knew Avaran was his enemy, and he was grieved.

Mary had witnessed the scene between Avaran and Jesus, but did not grasp the full meaning of all she heard. She went to her tent to weigh the new idea, as she too disliked the Romans and dreamed of the day when her people would once more be a great nation.

A little later the Master came into the tent, and Mary saw he was weary and heart-sore.

"Master, would it not be well for you to take a rest?" Mary asked kindly, for she loved the Master with a devotion that was almost pathetic. "I know my father is longing to see you and talk with you. A few days' rest would benefit you greatly."

"It is a long journey to your father's house."

"I saw several boats along the shore this morning, and we might hire them and cross the sea."

"You and mother are always thinking of my comfort, and it is more than generous in you. But I must work while the people will listen to me. Today, however, I will yield to your wish," and the Master went away to mingle with the people.

Mary did not understand all he said, but she saw when he was weary and needed rest. She called Tobia.

"You go down to the shore and hire two boats to take us to Magdala, a small one for mother and I, and a large one for the Master and his disciples. Take this," and she gave him a gold shekel, "and see that you fail not."

The slave returned shortly. "I engaged two boats, and the men are ready any time."

"That is good. Mother and I will leave shortly," Mary said. "You pack our effects and start for home."

"My son, Mary has secured two boats, one for you and one for us. We will leave for her home if it is agreeable to you."

Go, mother," he said kindly; "I will see that the crowd goes away satisfied, and then I shall follow you."

"I will send a servant with a torch to light you to the house when you arrive," Mary said as they went away.

"You are not leaving anything undone," the Master replied, and smiled as the two women went toward the sea.

The voyage across the sea was pleasant, and the two women reached Isaac's house in the early twilight.

"Father," Mary said as she greeted her parents, "the great teacher is none other than the Messiah, and he will be here this night."

Isaac looked at the mother for her to reply to Mary's declaration.

"What think you?" the mother asked, not concealing her joy.

"I have thought as much," Isaac admitted.

Mary was so eager to talk about the Master that she interrupted the conversation of the two.

Everything is possible with him. He can heal the sick, raise the dead, forgive sin and feed thousands with a few loaves and a few fishes. He is wonderful. No man, other than the Redeemer of Israel, could do these things. He will be here this night, and then you can talk with him of the marvelous things he has done."

"I will surely do so," Isaac said.

Hannah in the meantime had prepared every comfort for her guest. But Mary was in no mood to retire and related the wonderful things she had heard and seen. Isaac was not attentive to Mary's recital of her

trip and the part she took; an idea had presented itself and he was working out the possibilities.

Magdala had retired for the night, and as the ship of the Master approached the shore, all was dark save one torch near the water's edge. When the boat grated on the beach, the bearer of the torch drew near.

"Is this the boat of Jesus?" he asked, and when assured it was, he said: "Follow me, and I will take you to the house of Isaac Akiba."

When they reached the house the servant directed the apostles to their apartments and then led the Master to the private chamber of Isaac.

"Behold, the Messiah!" Isaac cried as he greeted Jesus. "Do not say that you are not He, for no man unless he is sent from God could do the things you have done."

"Are the things I have accomplished proof to you that I am He?"

"They are."

"Then I am the Redeemer to you."

"Not only to me, but to the whole of Israel. You must at once claim your title as King of Israel and sit on the throne of David. You can enforce your claim as no other man ever could."

"If I made such a claim, how would you suggest I enforce it?"

"How? For you it is simplicity itself. You have the power to heal men when they are wounded. You can raise them from the dead if they are killed.

Your army would not be depleted on account of sickness, and you could march from victory to victory. Besides, you could feed thousands on a small amount of food. Nothing is impossible. You must claim your own, and my all is at your disposal to assist you."

"And why should I fight for my kingdom?"

"The Romans will not surrender the country without a desperate contest. We hate them because they destroyed our nation and are crushing us. But with you as our leader we could not only redeem our land, but be rulers of the world, as Jehovah destined us to be. Say the word and I will send messengers to every part of the country, and in two weeks we can raise an army of fifty thousand, and you at the head, the tyrants of Israel will be driven from our borders," he said with enthusiasm, and he waited for the Master to answer in the affirmative.

"Friend Isaac, I fear you have a wrong conception of the Messiah. He will not lead an army to drive a ruler from the land of Israel, though that ruler may be a tyrant."

"How else can you establish your government?"

"What is the mission of Israel? Is it to conquer the world with the sword, or is it to win the nations with love? You have been taught to spread the sublime idea of one God until all peoples believed. If you conquered and held in subjection with the sword

all the nations, and you did it in the name of Jehovah, would the conquered believe in our Father? Would they not despise our Father, who held the sword over them?"

This was a new idea and he did not know how to answer. The dream of his life was swept away.

"How, then, will you establish your kingdom?" he asked helplessly.

"When I was your guest a few weeks ago we spoke of your riches and your employees. Did you think of the suggestion I made?"

"I not only thought of it, but I also tried it, and it worked out admirably," with pride.

"Just so, Friend Isaac. If every other business man in your city did the same, what do you suppose would be the result?"

"This city would be the happiest place in the world."

"If the idea has worked a revolution in your life and in the lives of your people, should you not try and get other men to do the same, that they too would be happier. And if the idea spread and men everywhere did the same, would you not create a new world?"

"It would take years, yes, centuries, before the idea would be universal."

"But you think it could be accomplished?"

"It would be a tremendous task," shaking his head.

"Friend Isaac, I have been going up and down the land preaching and teaching the people that God loves all men. Many who have heard me believed, and they believe so firmly that they would give their lives for their belief. That love of which they are so sure will conquer the world, and not an army of men with swords in their hands. Tell me, were not the greatest conquests in your life won by love and not by force?"

"I dare say, love is the conqueror."

"If love has been the prime force in your life, why not apply the principle of love until it masters the world?"

"It is hardly possible," Isaac said.

"With the Father all things are possible," Jesus said quietly.

"Teacher, I anxiously awaited your return, as I felt this night the movement to make you king would be inaugurated, and Israel would be a free people in the near future. You pointed out a different way to subdue the world, and I am slightly confused. I must have time to adjust my ideas." Then after a pause: "I know you are weary and will welcome a good rest," and with that he conducted the Master to his chamber.

Isaac did not seek his couch; he wrestled with himself until the first sign of dawn appeared. But the love of the Master won, and Isaac sheathed his sword.

The next morning the host was the last to appear for the morning meal.

"Master," Isaac said, "I see the world cannot be won with the sword. Love must rule and win the hearts of men. But I am weak, and not yet able to eradicate the hatred I have for the Romans. Give me the power to love those who ill treat me," he pleaded.

"Isaac," Jesus said, "you are sincere and honest. The Father wants men like you to spread His love, and He will give you grace to do it." And that moment the hatred was torn from his bosom and he was made a new man.

"Praise Jehovah!" was all he could say for a time. "I have now a faint idea of what it means to love Him with your whole mind, soul and heart."

"Keep that hold on the Father, and He will abide with you."

"I believe," Isaac said quietly.

After the morning meal was over the company repaired to the synagogue. The news had spread through the city that the teacher was in their midst, and the synagogue was crowded to overflowing. Jesus read and expounded the lesson. But the people

were not satisfied with the usual service, they were hungry for the life-giving word and clamored for further instruction. It was midday when they returned from the synagogue. In the evening the people gathered in the courtyard of the House of Marble and desired to be instructed, and they brought the sick to be healed.

"Master," said Isaac, after Jesus had dismissed the people, "is it not pathetic how eager the people are to hear the word of truth?"

"It is a good sign and many will be firm believers, and many will suffer for their belief. But they will teach after I have finished my work."

"I shall do my share, and my only regret is that I am on the evening side of life and can not give many years of my life to the cause."

"You are a man of influence, Isaac, and if you use it in the right way you can win many for the kingdom. You can do more than many a man who has a right to expect more years."

"I will do all I can for the advancement and spread of the truth."

"The feast is not many weeks hence and I must go to Jerusalem. Many are going that way already, and I must meet as many as I can and teach them, so that the truth will reach all parts of the country."

"You are not thinking of leaving?" Isaac asked.

"I shall leave on the morrow."

"Can you not tarry for a day or two? I want to accompany you, but it is necessary that I acquaint Joeser with my plans, so that my business will be carried on as usual and my people are not neglected," Isaac said.

"You can do more for the advancement of the kingdom if you stay at home than by going with me. A man is needed in every city and town who has the courage to stand for the truth. There are many in this city who believe, but they must have a man to lead them, and you are the man."

"I am not sufficiently acquainted with the truth to lead others," Isaac pleaded.

"You have heard me teach, and many of the things I said are lodged in your heart; and you have the knowledge that you are a child of God. If you meet a difficult situation, put yourself in the other man's place, and do to him as you would be done by. Apply this rule and you will come out victorious. Bring together those who believe in my word and talk of your experiences. Do these things and your spiritual life will expand and your usefulness will increase."

"Yes," said Isaac, still hesitating.

"Take a firm hold on God and you will not fail. All power comes from Him, and He is waiting to bestow that power, but you must ask for it, and He will

fill you with the Spirit." Jesus said this so earnestly and with such conviction that Isaac felt it must be true, and new courage came to him.

"I will do as you desire," surrendering his will to the Father.

The Master rejoiced when Isaac surrendered his will. Jesus knew He now had a faithful servant who would carry forward the work He had planted.

Early the following morning Jesus and His company left Magdala and took the road toward Jerusalem. They had not gone very far when they overtook travelers who were going in the same direction. Some had heard of the teacher and were anxious to hear Him; others, who had not heard of Him, asked who the man was. All tarried and listened. Many believed, others marveled at His teaching and others passed by with a sneer. A few accompanied Him for days and others passed on to Jerusalem to enjoy the excitement of the city. The ever-changing and inquiring crowd hampered the journey of the Master.

Mary saw that the Master grew more serious the nearer they drew to the holy city. The smile was less frequent, and an indefinable something crept over His countenance. The evenings He used to spend with His mother in the tent He now spent in solitude, and some nights He did not return until nearly morning. But He was always ready to teach the wait-

ing crowds. His teaching, however, had a different tenor, and carried a note of sadness. Mary also saw that the mother had lost much of her cheerfulness and spent much of her time in meditation. She felt something must be done to restore the smile to the mother's face and revive the drooping spirit of the Master. A complete rest, she reasoned, would be the best remedy for both.

The Master had been in the tent for a short rest after the midday meal, and Mary was alarmed at the worn-out expression of the teacher.

"Mother," Mary said after they were alone, "Jesus looks exhausted and I fear for His health. Can we not persuade Him to take a rest?"

The mother did not answer, and Mary saw tears in her eyes.

"Mother," Mary said and put her arms around her shoulders, "what is it that troubles you?"

"I too see the haggard expression of my son and have asked Him to retire for a while, but He will not listen to me. He says He can hold out to the end."

"What end? Surely He is not thinking of giving up teaching?" Mary said with concern.

"No; His one pleasure is to teach. But a crisis is approaching. The priests in Jerusalem are His deadly enemies, and they know He is coming to the

feast; and if they accomplish their end they will do Him bodily harm."

"What cause have they to be His enemies? They are the leaders of the Church and should welcome His teaching." Mary could not understand why the priests, who are God's ambassadors, should want to harm Him.

"They should welcome His teaching, but they have wandered so far from God that they have lost His spirit and love. In its place they have adopted a cold formalism and cultivated avaricious desires. The temple of Jehovah to them is not a place of worship, but a place where they cheat and rob the poor, so the priests can live in ease and luxury."

"I had hoped the priests would receive Him gladly and during the feast proclaim Him and accept Him as the Messiah, so that men and women from every quarter would believe on Him and return to their homes and spread the glad tidings."

"I have thought the same, but the priests are jealous of their power. And they love gold better than the souls of men."

"Then I would say, they are not worthy to occupy the exalted place they fill," indignantly.

"My son has told them as much and pointed out their hypocrisy. For this reason they seek to harm Him."

"The Master does not wish to remove them from their office, and I cannot fathom why they should oppose Him. If they knew Him and His purpose, they would love Him."

"My daughter," the mother said, "He teaches love and charity, and He expounds the truth of the Father. They are strangers to these things and are afraid Jesus will win the people to Himself, and after a time the temple will have no worshipers and will not be supported by the people. Selfishness prompts their actions."

"What you say is clear, still I can not comprehend why the priests should oppose the truth, when they are the men selected to teach the truth and minister in Jehovah's temple."

"They prefer sin to righteousness," the mother said.

Mary's spirit was disturbed. "If the priests only knew Him and loved Him as I do, they would assist to spread His teaching." Mary sighed and felt that she must do something to change the attitude of the ruling powers.

Mary kept a close watch over the Master and His mother. After they had crossed the fords of the Jordan at Jericho, Mary noticed with alarm that the sadness deepened in the Master's face. His teaching, however, was none the less effective, and His devotion to His mother was more tender.

The company encamped for the night outside the city of Jericho. The crowd which accompanied the Master was large, and He was kept busy teaching. Mary and the mother had retired to their tent, as the mother was anxious to get away from the crowd, as she too grew sadder as they drew nearer the holy city.

"Mother," Mary said with alarm, "it pains me to see you so sad. Is there anything I can do to relieve the burden?"

"My child," the mother said, "you can not remove the burden, and you can not understand. Nor does the world understand, but it will after a while. That the world may know and appreciate what my son is doing He must give His life."

"Mother, you do not know what you say. Why should a man who is teaching as He does and in the prime of life have to sacrifice His life?"

"To complete His teaching He must show the world that life is unending. To do this He must give His life and then take it again. All this He has known and so have I. We have often spoken of it, and were anxious that He should please the Father in all things. He lives very close to the Father, and my son has received strength to endure all things calmly up to this hour. But as the time for the supreme test approaches, fear sometimes comes to Him that He might fail."

‘Must He give His life so that the world will believe?’

“The Scripture says in order to save the world He must make the sacrifice, and circumstances are such that we believe He must make sacrifice soon. He does not shrink to offer His life for His teaching, and I want my son to be brave, but,” she cried in her agony of soul, “I am thinking of the suffering that attends the surrender.”

“Mother, this tragedy must be averted,” Mary cried when the full force of the woman’s words were made clear to her. “I will go to Jerusalem at once. My father has influence there, and I shall see the priests and tell them it is not the Master’s wish to destroy, but to build up. Something must be done to save Him.”

The mother did not oppose Mary. Perhaps the agony might be put off until some future time.

Mary summoned her servant. “Tobia,” she said, excitedly, “get two camels ready, one for you and one for me. I must go to Jerusalem at once and you must accompany me.”

“Night is approaching, and there is danger in traveling in the darkness,” he counseled.

“I have no fear. The Father watches over His own. Come, do not tarry,” and Mary turned away.

Tobia returned shortly and the two set out for Jerusalem.

"Urge the camels on, Tobia; I must get to Jerusalem as soon as possible."

When they reached the city the hour was late and the gates were closed. She, with others who were late, camped by the city wall.

After the Master had dismissed the crowd He retired to the hills to commune with the Father. On His return He saw His mother sitting in her tent.

"Mother, you should retire. These vigils will break your health."

"My boy, come in."

"Mother," Jesus said as He came to her side, "you are sad. What is the trouble?"

"My boy," she said as she took His hand, "you know what is crushing me."

"Yes, mother," He said tenderly, "I know what is burdening your sensitive soul. You knew before I was born this was required of me, and you must take courage and meet it bravely. You have heard the Father speak to me and encourage me so that I would not lose heart. I think I have the fortitude to endure it all. He has always given me grace for every trial, and He will do so again. I did hope," He said after a moment, "I might continue teaching for a few years, but this is not to be, as the priests are bent on taking my life. The Father knows best, and if He thinks I have preached His gospel long enough, His will must be done."

"Your words are comforting, and the Father will be with us, as He has always been. We must give ourselves entirely to Him, and you will conquer."

"Yes, mother, with His help I will conquer," and He took His mother in His arms and kissed her. "God is with us."

After a long silence He asked: "Where is our Mary?"

"She saw the sadness in your face for the past weeks and she inquired the cause. I told her what you thought might come to pass before long. She could not believe that the priests hated you so passionately and thought if they understood you and your teaching, they would love you instead. She and her servant set out for Jerusalem this evening and her purpose is to see the high priest and tell him what manner of man you are and the glad tidings you preach."

"She is a noble-spirited woman, and her company has been a blessing to you. She loves you with a devotion that is beautiful, and she is growing in her relation to the Father. As for her going to Jerusalem to influence the priests, it is useless. They are determined in their course, and angels from heaven could not change them. Mary does not know the hypocrisy of those who should teach the people the word of life."

"This is a sinful world," the mother sighed.

"It is a wicked world, mother, but it is a beautiful world; and it will grow in beauty as the people learn justice and learn to love the Father. And I will do all I can to make the world better."

"I know, my son, you will do all you can to make the world better. But as the final hour approaches, my spirit quails."

"The hour is late and we are weary. We must have a few hours' rest to meet the duties of the on-coming day." Again He kissed her and went out.

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Mary was astir early in the morning and waiting with impatience for the gates of the city to open. When the gate finally was opened, she was the first to enter, and made her way to the home of the high priest. On arriving at the palatial residence of Caiaphas, she saw no signs of life save a servant cleaning the yard.

"I would like to see Caiaphas, the high priest," Mary said addressing the servant.

He looked at her a moment and then laughed. "You do not know that Caiaphas is fond of sleeping while the birds sing their morning song."

"He has not arisen for the day?" Mary asked with surprise.

"No, and he will not arise for an hour or two. He indulges in sleep while others work."

"My errand is urgent, and I would like to see him," disappointed.

"I would like to be of service to you, but to disturb his morning nap would mean I would lose my place in his household, and I do not desire that, as it is too pleasant a place."

Mary saw there was nothing to be gained by talking to the servant. "Where is the home of Annas?"

"Annas, the high priest that was?"

"Yes."

"Are you acquainted with him?"

"He extended his hospitality to me a number of times."

"Then you do not live in Jerusalem?"

"No, my home is in Magdala. The gate of the city was closed when I arrived last evening. I was compelled to camp by the city wall. Hence my early call. You have not told me where Annas resides," she reminded him.

"The third house down the street." The servant noted Mary was in a hurry and her attitude did not invite further questioning. "You will probably find him abroad, as he is not so fond of his bed."

Mary hurried down the street. The house was not as large as that of Caiaphas, still it commanded attention. Mary knocked at the front door and a servant, who looked none too agreeable, opened the door.

"What is it you wish this early hour?" he grumbled.

"I wish to see Annas."

"He can not be disturbed at this hour; he is at his morning devotions."

Mary thought a man who attended to his morning devotions would be a pious man and not opposed to her Master. "Will you inform Annas that Mary, the daughter of Isaac Akiba, of Magdala, wishes to speak to him?" And Mary pressed a coin into his palm. The servant came to life at once and was all smiles.

"Please step inside," with alacrity, "and I will inform Annas of your presence." And he led her into a richly furnished room.

"This surely is an early call from the daughter of my friend Isaac," Annas said, all smiles, as he entered the room. "And how is your father?"

"When I left home he was enjoying good health."

"Have you not been home recently?"

"I left my father's house three weeks ago."

"So you are on a pleasure trip. It is right that the young should desire to see the world. When age creeps upon you, you like your home and a few friends, above all else."

"I have not been on a pleasure trip. I am in the company of Jesus of Nazareth."

At the mention of Jesus' name anger clouded the face of Annas for a fleeting moment. He was too

clever to entertain his passion in the presence of the daughter of his rich friend.

"He no doubt helped you in more ways than one," with just a shade of sarcasm.

The attitude of the man puzzled her.

"He indeed did help me in more ways than one. He healed my body and put me in right relation with the Father."

"That is something to be grateful for," was all the comment he made. Mary expected that this man, who had been high priest, would rejoice with her and thank God she had been healed in body and soul. His indifference took the ardor out of her mission, but she determined to state her errand.

"I came to see you in His behalf," Mary said.

"How do you think I could be of assistance to Him? I do not hold an office, and a man without an office has no influence."

"Jesus is near Jericho, and is on His way to Jerusalem to attend the feast. He and His mother are troubled because the priests are not friendly to Him, and His mother thinks the priests might do Him bodily harm. You are a man of influence, though you may not hold office, and if you defend Him, I am sure no one would molest Him."

"My influence would have no weight, and what I might say would be of no consequence."

"You have heard Him teach?" Mary asked.

"I heard Him talk. I do not know if you call that teaching or not. I have paid no attention to the man, but I have heard men discuss his work."

"They must have spoken well of Him," Mary said, not heeding the indifference of Annas, "as He is a remarkable teacher. Many follow Him and believe His word. I am sure if the authorities knew Him and understood His teaching, they would not seek to injure Him."

"Probably not," with the faintest sneer. "You must eat breakfast with me and then see Caiaphas, the high priest; he is my son-in-law. He has authority and can see to it that your friend is not molested while in Jerusalem." Annas felt it was unworthy his dignity to discuss with the young woman the thing she had in mind; besides, he did not want to offend her. Annas had not forgotten the liberal contributions of her father.

During the meal Mary was slightly preoccupied. She felt her mission was not received with the enthusiasm she had expected from so great a man in the Church.

"My daughter, you state your errand to the city, to Caiaphas; he is the high priest and the president of the Sanhedrin; he has more power and influence to protect your friend than I have," Annas said very graciously after they had finished the morning meal.

Mary was at a loss to understand why this man, a leader in the Church and who had been high priest, took no interest in Jesus, whose one aim was to help people and establish righteousness.

"I would like to see Caiaphas," Mary said when the servant she had seen earlier in the morning answered her knock.

"He is not at home," the servant said indifferently.

"I was here early this morning and was told he would rise at this hour, and now you say he is not at home."

"True, this is his usual hour to arise, but he has many duties at present. The feast is near at hand."

"And where can I find him?"

"I know not; but I take it for granted he went to the temple."

Mary and her servant hastened to the temple. The various courts were full of people, and commotion was on every hand in preparation for the feast. Booths and stalls were erected in the outer court, where every conceivable article, for the comfort and convenience of the worshiper, was for sale.

Mary asked several temple attendants if they had seen the high priest. Each gave her a different answer, and none could tell her where she might find him. When she reached the court of the women she offered the prayer prescribed by the Talmud, but somehow it seemed an empty and useless prayer

when compared to the prayer of Jesus, or to her own spontaneous outpouring of her soul to God. In the midst of the unfriendly temple and the indifference to real, heart-felt worship, Mary questioned if her mission to protect the Master would not be fruitless.

"Perhaps he is in the hall of the Sanhedrin?" Mary said to herself, and made her way to that chamber in the temple.

"Is Caiaphas in the hall of the Sanhedrin?" Mary asked the porter.

"He is within and the Sanhedrin is in session," the porter said.

"I would like to see him."

"There are many who would like to see him, but he can not be seen until the session is over, and when that will be I do not know. They must have weighty matters to discuss, or they would not be assembled this early in the day."

"Will you give Caiaphas a message for me when their deliberations are ended?"

"If I see him," indifferently.

Mary knew how to get service and pressed a silver shekel into his palm.

"And what is the message you wish me to deliver?" graciously.

"Tell Caiaphas the daughter of Isaac Akiba, of Magdala, is without and wishes to speak to him."

"You tarry in the first gallery for the women," the porter directed, "and when the deliberations are over I shall see to it that he will give you an audience."

Within the hall set apart for the discussion and deliberation of questions that pertained to the Jewish Church the Sanhedrin was assembled. Caiaphas called the assembly to order.

"Brethren," Caiaphas said with slight arrogance, "I called you to this sacred hall at this early hour to lay before you matters of grave importance. You are aware that the man who is called Jesus of Nazareth has been going up and down our land preaching. We, who are learned in the law, do not deign to pay any attention to Him, because He is not worthy of notice. But the common people are listening to Him and many are following Him. They are not only following Him, but they are also neglecting the temple of Jehovah. They are not paying their tithes, and the gifts are fewer every day. What is the result? The treasury is low, and if this man is allowed to continue His false teaching, our treasury will be empty, and we, the rulers of the Church, will be beggars. The dignity of the temple must not suffer. Our treasury must be replenished, but this can only be done by bringing the people back to a sense of their duty."

"I made it my business," Caiaphas continued, "to send out spies to learn what this man is doing. They returned last evening and reported that many people are following Him. They also said there is little evidence that the rich and prosperous cities along the Sea of Galilee will send large contributions this year. And you know, brethren, that heretofore it required half a score of camels to bring their gifts. It is self-evident that the temple must not suffer on account of one man who is not recognized by us as a teacher."

"This surely is a grave situation," said one of the Sadducees, "and we would not want the high priest to be a beggar on account of an empty treasury. I would like to know, however, how he intends to remove this threatening condition." There was a trace of ridicule in the speaker's tone and attitude.

"The opinions from some of the other brethren will be welcome," Caiaphas said with slight anger.

"I would suggest we imprison Him or banish Him from the country. If the people do not hear Him they will return to the temple and support its worship," said one of the Pharisees.

"The brother who just sat down," said another of the Sadducees, "merely suggested we imprison or banish Him. I am glad he did not advocate that it be done. If any of you witnessed the occasion a few years ago when He drove the money-changers from

the courts, he would hesitate to suggest or assist in His arrest. I have seen men angry, but I have never seen such indignation in any man's face as I saw in His when He cleared the temple. His wrath was so forceful that men fled before it. No, I would not be a party to help in His arrest."

"Does the brother mean to insinuate that this body would hesitate to arrest Him? A man who has no organized followers, would He have the power to resist us?" Caiaphas said with indignation.

"I know not if He would resist if an attempt were made to apprehend Him. But this I do know, there is not a man in this body that can withstand His wrath. His anger is not a petty thing; it is backed by a conviction that can not be opposed," the speaker said with heat.

"Brethren," said one of the Pharisees, "this body must not forget its dignity by indulging in a heated argument. Can the high priest tell us what this man teaches that attracts the people and draws them away from the true place of worship?"

"His teaching is such drivel that it is not worthy of consideration. I do know He has the audacity to say He is sent from God. Such a statement should not be tolerated by this body. I fear we have been lenient too long as it is."

"Then the high priest does not think it possible that this man is sent by Jehovah? I have heard Him teach, and He does expound the law and the proph-

ets in a way that is convincing," Nicodemus said feebly.

"Are you one of His followers?" Caiaphas sneered. "Has this man's teaching found acceptance with one of the members of this sacred body?"

Nicodemus did not have the courage to make a reply.

"He is an impostor," said one of the Pharisees scoffingly. "I do not think it becoming the dignity of this body to take any notice of Him. He will go the way of all impostors; He will have a following for a while, and then the people will return to the fold."

"What the last brother said is true of impostors. But this man's teaching is different from that of the false teachers. He expounds the word of Jehovah in such a way that people believe and lead better lives."

"Are you one of His followers?" Caiaphas interrupted the speaker.

"I am not. But I have examined the methods of teachers who flourished for a time and then disappeared. I do not pretend to be a prophet, but I believe He will be loved and His teaching followed by untold numbers long after we are forgotten."

"We are obeying the law!" Caiaphas cried with anger, "and following the worship of the temple as instituted by Moses, and any man who dares to do otherwise is an enemy of the law and of God."

"We are in an unpleasant mood about this man, and we know not if He is coming to the feast," said one member, trying to pour oil on the troubled sea.

"My spies reported that He is coming. And if He does and we permit Him to teach, this temple will have no worshipers in a short time and our treasury will be empty. This body must see to it that He does not teach in Jerusalem."

"And what would you suggest we do to stop Him from teaching?" asked one of the Sadducees, who seemed amused by the proceedings.

"I suggest this man be put to death!" with vehemence.

All were startled by the cruel assertion. After a time a few gave assent to the audacious hint, but the majority were opposed.

"Is it not better that one man die," Caiphas cried, "than that this magnificent temple and its worship ordained by Jehovah be destroyed?"

"I do not think it necessary that this or any other man die because His teaching is different from that we are accustomed to hear," said one of the venerable members. "Let the man come to the feast, and we shall examine His teaching. We must be honest and see that justice is done. If after we have listened to Him and found His teaching false, then we can take action. But if we find His teaching is in harmony with the law and the prophets, we must be

men and accept it. I can not see the slightest danger of the temple worship being discontinued or destroyed, if He teaches the word of Jehovah. On the other hand, I can see where the worship will grow in favor with the people."

"It is quite clear to me," said Caiphas with a superior air, "that the members of this body do not appreciate the danger that is threatening the Church. Concurred action can not be had at this time on account of the indifference of its members. It were well for every member to examine the teaching of this man, and at some future time this body can be called and definite action can be taken. We stand adjourned," he said abruptly.

It was midday when the members issued from the hall. A few gathered around Caiphas and applauded him for having taken so firm a stand, and acquiesced in his opinions. Others laughed at the high priest, and a few who had heard Jesus feared for His life, as Caiphas had an insane hatred toward the man.

The porter tugged the sleeve of the high priest. "What is it?" he asked with ill-concealed temper.

"The daughter of Isaac Akiba, of Magdala, is without and wishes to speak to you."

Caiphas was thoughtful for a moment. "Akiba," he said to himself, "ah, yes, I recall him. Tell his daughter I will be out in a moment."

The porter sought Mary in the woman's gallery and delivered the message.

In the excitement Caiphas forgot about Mary, and she waited a long time at the door of the hall.

"I am sure you will forgive me for keeping you waiting so long," Caiphas said in his oily manner. "These are troublesome times, and I can not be as prompt in my appointments as I want to be. How is the health of your father and my friend?"

"Father is in the best of health."

"And he will be up for the feast?"

"I know not."

"It is past midday, and you must be hungry after waiting so long for me. Come, we must refresh ourselves." And Caiphas led the way to an exclusive bazaar in the temple.

"Did you say your father was coming up to the feast?" Caiphas asked the second time after they were comfortably seated.

"I have not seen my father for several weeks, and I do not know what plans he has. If he does not come, he will send his usual contribution to the temple."

"If all were as faithful and pious as you and your father are, there would be no cause for alarm," Caiphas said. He was thinking of the large contribution for the temple and the personal gift Isaac bestowed each year.

"And what is it you wish to see me about?" he asked very graciously.

"Have you heard of Jesus?" Mary asked.

Caiphas was startled and did not reply for a moment. "Yes," he finally said, "I have heard of Him."

"I must be cautious," he said to himself.

"Why do you ask?"

"I have been in the company of Jesus and His followers for some time. Of late He is not happy, and when I learned the cause of His sadness I was amazed. He said the priests of Jerusalem were bent on doing Him harm," Mary said innocently.

"You say you have been in His company. Tell me, what does He teach?" with feigned interest.

"He teaches the word of the Father, and He heals the body and soul of men and women," Mary said with enthusiasm.

"Are you sure He cures people, or is it only make-believe?"

"I know whereof I speak. He healed me of a malady the best doctors could not cure. He also gave me that peace of mind and heart that is beyond description. You know what I mean; you are a priest of God and understand all these things," Mary said, but Caiphas did not understand.

"Since you have been in His company for some time, do you think He is sent from God?"

"Beyond a doubt. No man could do the things He does if God were not with him. He is the long expected Messiah," Mary said with fervor.

"Has this imposter gone to the extent that He boasts He is the Messiah? He must be put to death. He is perverting the people," he said to himself.

"Did you come to tell me this man is the Messiah?" Caiphas had difficulty in checking his sarcasm.

"I came to ask you to protect Him, to see that no harm comes to Him at the hands of the priests."

"My daughter, the Sanhedrim decides matters pertaining to the Church and her doctrines. We have no authority to hurt any man. The punishment of a criminal is the duty of the civil authority."

"He is not a criminal," Mary said quickly. "He is the very opposite—He is love and kindness itself."

"Do not misunderstand me, daughter. I simply pointed out our duty and that of the civil powers."

"And you will protect Him?" she asked eagerly.

"If He does not disturb the peace, I see no reason why He should be molested," evading Mary's question.

"And will you hear Him when He comes to the city?"

"If He attends the feast, I probably shall have an opportunity to hear Him."

"Do all His followers acclaim Him the Messiah?" Caiphas asked after a moment. "And does He say that He is the Messiah?"

"His friends say He is none other. He never mentions it to the people; His first concern is that men and women should forsake sin and live in harmony with the Father."

"And many believe?"

"Yes, many believe and are made whole. You must hear Him when He comes to Jerusalem. His very presence makes you feel that you are nearer heaven. But you must see and hear Him to appreciate His sublime character," with ardor.

"I probably shall hear and see Him when He comes to the feast," thinking of his well-laid plans.

"You do not know how happy you have made me, and I am confident the Master will be equally as glad when I tell Him the Sanhedrim has no intention to injure Him."

"You need have no fear that we will do Him harm," Caiphas assured his visitor as he led her out of the bazaar.

Mary called Tobia and they set out to find the Master. Her heart overflowed with joy that she had the assurance of the priest that they would treat Him kindly. This news would gladden the Master's heart.

Mary met the company outside of Bethany, but she could not speak to the Master, as He was surrounded by a large crowd. Many in that crowd were on their way to Jerusalem to purify themselves, and tarried to hear Jesus teach. They were amazed with the

words of life, and they were loath to continue their journey.

After much searching she found the mother, and was startled when she saw the increased sadness in her face.

“Oh, mother!” Mary cried, “I have news for you that will drive all your sorrow away. I saw Caiphas, the high priest, and he promised me that no harm should come to the Master.”

“My daughter,” the mother said tenderly, “your concern for my son’s safety is great indeed, and I wish what you said were true.”

“The high priest told me so with his own lips,” Mary said, and she was disappointed that the mother did not receive the news with confidence. “Do you think he would betray his word?”

“I hope he will not; but priests have been known not to keep their word. You must tell my boy of your mission.”

Mary saw that all she said did not lighten the burden or remove the sorrow that had settled on the handsome features of the woman. She must wait and tell the Master; He would understand. But she had to wait until late in the evening. The company entered Bethany, and Jesus and His immediate followers went to the house of Simon the leper. Many people were there, and He was busy until late in the

evening. After the crowd had retired for the night, Jesus, His mother and Mary went to the upper room.

"Master," Mary said as soon as they were alone, "I was in Jerusalem and saw the high priest, and I have his assurance that he will not harm you. You can go to the temple without fear of molestation."

"Mary," He said kindly, "you are a devoted daughter of the Father, and you undertook a dangerous journey in my behalf. You love my teaching, and are anxious that many should hear me and believe. You sought the one man in Jerusalem who can avert any mischief, if he is so minded. You say he promised you that he would not injure me? In that, I believe, he is truthful; he would not lay a hand on me, but that does not prevent him from employing emissaries to harm me to the extent of taking my life. To show you the cunning of the man, you do not know that he has spies following me for the past three months. They consort with the disciples, they ask all manner of questions and they listen to my teaching. All they observe and learn they report to their master, Caiphas, the high priest."

"He gave me his word, and he may have repented of his action," Mary said.

"My daughter, you have always been in the company of people who are honest in every respect, and you think all men are honest. You have always associated with people who are truthful, and you ex-

pected to find absolute truth in the servants of the temple of God, but the truth is not in them. They are filled with hatred, and will betray their friends to retain their power."

"I did not think the servants of the Father were such wicked men," Mary said.

"Mary, my gospel, which demands an upright life, has pricked the consciences of the priests, and they are determined to silence me."

She buried her face in her hands.

"Daughter," Jesus said tenderly, "the Father sent me to proclaim a new gospel, and I have planted it firmly in your heart and in many other hearts. After I have finished my work, you minister in my stead and spread the glad tidings everywhere. My suffering will be excruciating, but the hour must come. The Father will give me strength to bear it, as He has always done in every trial, and He will not forsake me in the crucial hour. But I shall triumph—I will rise from the dead, so that you and all others may know that there is a life beyond—a life that is never ending."

"Will they stone you?" Mary asked with horror.

"No, the Romans do not stone their criminals."

"Will they crucify you?" Mary cried with terror. "That is the most awful of tortures," and she buried her face in her hands.

"It must be so, to fulfill my mission," Jesus said softly.

When Mary looked up again she and the mother were alone.

"Where is He?" Mary asked in an awed whisper.

"He has gone on yonder hill to commune with the Father and to receive strength to endure the coming days."

"Can I do nothing that will avert this cruel tragedy?" she asked in agony.

"It must come to pass, my daughter."

"But He is so young and has so many years in which to spread the glad gospel."

"He said you and I must be His ministers after He has finished His work. Let us renew our faith and our courage, and all will work out for the best. I see that your heart aches, and you would do anything to prevent the tragedy, but my suffering is greater—I am His mother."

"Come, let us retire," the mother said after a long silence.

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Early in the morning a concourse of people waited for the Master. The gospel of joy the Master had expounded the day before had lifted the souls of the people so near heaven that they gave expression to their rapture in song. The Master looked so kingly when He came out of the house that the throng burst anew into singing the psalms. A colt was brought and the man nearest the animal threw his coat over

the beast's back, and they lifted the Master on the animal. Others ran and tore branches from the trees and strewed them in the road, others threw their garments in the way, and in a few minutes the highway resembled a many-colored carpet. As they neared the city many people came out to meet them, and they too were singing the psalms of David. Jesus entered the city a conqueror — not as the ancients with sword and captives chained to their chariots; but a conqueror who had captivated the people with His words and drew them with chains of love.

Mary followed the Master as closely as she could. And when she saw the crowd and heard the songs, new hope sprang into her heart and she felt no one dared to touch Him when the crowd surrounded Him. "And who can tell," she said to herself, "they may proclaim Him king and He may yet ascend the throne of David."

On reaching the temple Jesus saw all manner of fowls and animals for sale, and the money-changers were everywhere. A righteous indignation took possession of Him. Those that had witnessed the previous cleansing of the temple hastily gathered up their wares and withdrew. Others did not have time, or thought He would not have the courage to repeat the cleansing.

"You have made my Father's sanctuary a place to rob and cheat," Jesus said as He laid the whip of

cards across the backs of the money-changers. "Depart and defile not the place that is set apart for the worship of Jehovah."

His anger was awe-inspiring and all fled before Him. Confusion reigned for a little time. The friends of Jesus saw in the cleansing extraordinary power, and one cried: "Behold, a prophet of the Most High is in Israel, and He will save His people." Another shouted: "The great Deliverer is among us." Still another cried: "This is none other than the Son of David." The friendly uproar had reached such proportions that the chief of the temple police thought it best to eject the Master from the temple. But when he saw many were friendly to Jesus he did not think it advisable.

Mary was in the midst of the confusion, and heard with pleasure the shouts of the people. And she prayed that He would ascend the throne of David. She saw Caiphas in the crowd, and was disappointed he did not speak to Jesus. A little later, when Jesus was talking to the multitude, she saw Caiphas incite the people to raise a disturbance, and he sneered at the Master. Mary was astonished that the high priest stooped to the level of a poltroon. The confidence she had in the man fled from her, as he had betrayed his word, and she knew it was useless to look to him for protection.

The city was crowded with people from every quarter. Those who had heard Jesus talked of the marvelous things He said and did, others who had not heard Him inquired what manner of man He was. There were groups of men everywhere, and they discussed the work of Jesus. Some said He was a colossal impostor; others said He was a prophet, and a few said He was the long-expected Messiah. There were all shades of opinions. But no concordant effort was made to proclaim Him king, and Mary was disappointed. Her one prayer was that the people might know Him as she did, and then there would be no doubt as to what the crowd would do. Mary had not yet learned that His kingdom was to be established in the hearts of men and not on the throne of David. One thing was gradually unfolding itself to her—the priests were bent on expelling Him from the city or to take His life. The priests could not take the Master, because the people pressed about Him, but she did not know what cunning they might use with the civil authorities and persuade them to apprehend the Master. The idea drove her almost to distraction. She must see Pilate.

Mary and Tobia set out for the palace of Pilate. Their progress was slow on account of the crowd, and when they did reach the palace they were informed that he was not at home. Mary was disappointed. The day was far spent and she was tired,

and she made her way to Bethany to the home of Martha, where the mother was staying. She was discouraged that she had not accomplished anything to make the stay of her Master in Jerusalem safe.

"My daughter," the mother said kindly when Mary entered the house, "you are tired."

"Yes, mother, I am tired; but that is as nothing compared to my failure to accomplish anything that will assure the life of Him we love," with a sad heart.

"I know you have done all you could, because you love the work He is doing. But wicked men are banded together to do Him injury, and I know not what could be done to circumvent their designs."

"God may show me a way, and I have not done all I can do, and on the morrow shall make another effort in His behalf."

They sat in silence in the young evening for a long time.

"Mary," the mother whispered, "I have told you, and He said the same, that He must give His life for the gospel He is preaching. It will be like taking my life, but when it is all over and the short space of days has passed we shall be united never to separate."

"Yes, yes," Mary said, "that will be glorious, but, look, He has taught only a few years, and He should teach twenty, thirty, yes, forty years. Imagine what

effect His teaching would have on the world if He taught forty years. He would turn every Hebrew, from the greatest to the least, to Jehovah, and our land would once more be a land of milk and honey. Ours would be an ideal land and nation. Do you not see the great good He could do if He taught for many years? Besides, He loves life the same as we do."

"All that you say I have thought of and prayed it might be so. Mary," the mother said after she had hesitated a moment, "I was glad beyond words when I was selected from among the maidens in Israel to be the mother of the Messiah. I taught Him the fear of Jehovah in His tender youth, and early acquainted Him with all that had happened in connection with His birth. I had learned—and I taught Him what had to take place that He might fulfill His mission. But I too thought it would be later in His life and that I would precede Him in crossing; and I often thought what the meeting would be like after He had finished His work. But it is not to be as I had thought, and He must give His life for His cause in the vigor of His manhood—and I must be a witness to the tragedy."

"God, must it be now?" Mary cried and sprang to her feet and gazed toward heaven. "Oh, mother, I have prayed that He might be spared, but I have not received a definite answer."

"We can not understand the ways of the Father. He knows best. Our agony is crushing, but it is as nothing to what He must experience to make the sacrifice."

"Where can I find Him?" Mary asked.

"I know not; He is out and is somewhere in communion with the Father. He must renew His strength and receive guidance for the morrow."

"Mother, do you think He is displeased with my efforts to protect Him?"

"I think not; He knows how you love the gospel and how eager you are that many should hear Him."

"On the morrow I shall make another effort to help Him. I feel I must do something," Mary cried.

"I am afraid all we can do will not stay the hands of sinful men."

And with that the two women went to their humble room for the night.

Mary was up early the next morning, but Jesus was up even earlier and so were many others. They pressed about the Master and were eager to hear Him. Mary could not get near Him, but she saw, from a distance, the look of peace and love which is acquired by close fellowship with the Father that was in His face, and it thrilled her heart. She felt if she were that close to the Father she too could endure all for Him, and in a small measure understood how Jesus was meeting the crisis so calmly. Still, she felt

she had not done all to avert the tragedy. She, with Tobia, set out for Jerusalem to make another effort.

Caiphas was abroad before the city was awake. These were trying days and much was at stake. He dispatched several of his servants to summon the members of the Sanhedrim for a meeting in the early hours of the day. Caiphas was anxious to lay his plans before that body and to report the work of his spies.

"Brethren," Caiphas said after he had called the Sanhedrim to order. "I disliked to call you from your homes this early in the day, but matters of moment are to be discussed and a decision must be reached." He spoke with slight arrogance; he was a young man.

"I need not mention what you all know, but this body, which has the care of the temple, can no longer be insulted by this imposter that is in our midst, and who has driven the business from the temple. You saw what He did—He attempted to destroy a custom that is in vogue for many years. This body has decided that it is not sacriligious to see animals in the temple that are to be sacrificed to Jehovah, and that it is not profaning the temple to change the money of foreigners into temple currency. And yet, without authority this Galilean peasant has driven them from the temple. It is time this man were put to death before He raises a greater disturbance."

"Can a man be put to death for doing what He has done?" one of the members asked.

"Perhaps not for this one act, but He teaches in the temple without the authority of **this** body. Is that lawful? He is not a priest, and never sought to be of that high calling. And yet, He arrogates unto Himself more authority than one of this body would think of doing."

"What authority has He taken?" asked an enemy of Caiphas.

"You are in the temple every day and your question is superfluous. You know, brethren, He teaches that He and the Father are one. This would make Him the Son of God, and if that were true He would be the Messiah. If He is the Consolation Israel is awaiting, why does He not claim the throne of David?"

"Have you heard the man teach?" asked another member unfriendly to Caiphas.

"I have, and what is it? It is nothing but words multiplied, and men of this body will not waste their time listening."

"The common people are eager to hear Him, and there must be something attractive in His teaching."

"The opinion of the common people is not to be countenanced. They are at liberty to follow whom they please. Not so with this body; we must uphold the dignity of the temple and impress our thoughts

and opinions on the people. History records that many have taught false doctrines and flourished for a time and then disappeared. This man no doubt will do the same, but He has more courage than most impostors—He claims to be equal with God, and you know that is blasphemy.”

“Can you furnish proof that He makes Himself equal with God?” asked one of the members.

“One of my spies heard Him say it, and will testify to that effect when called upon.”

“How do you expect to apprehend Him, seeing that He is ever surrounded by a crowd?”

“I have that all arranged,” with evil cunning. “I and several of this body have met that situation with a few shekels. One of my spies bribed one of His close followers, and the night He eats the Passover with His close followers, he will inform us where it will take place, and then we can arrest Him.”

The scheme was approved by many of the members.

“You have done well to rid Israel of this impostor,” said a friend of Caiaphas. “We would be pleased to learn, however, how you expect to have Him put to death.”

“We can not pass sentence, but the civil powers can.”

“Is the governor sufficiently interested to pass the sentence of death?”

"I know Pilate would like to own a certain pair of Arabian steeds. If they were presented he might pass sentence and not ask many questions."

At this point in the proceedings a venerable member got to his feet, and in silence they waited for him to speak. "I am a member of this body for many years," he said, "and I have seen many cases decided and few that were unjust. The case before us this morning is put in such a way that we might be led to think it was one of great importance. Let us examine it and see if it is or is not. The man in question is a peasant, as has been said, and He has been going about teaching, and what has He taught? It is not contrary to the teachings of Moses and the prophets, hence it can not be wrong. If He expounds the Scriptures of the Church in such a way that the common people can understand them and cause them to lead better lives, is He not doing a great work for the Church, and should He not be welcomed by this body instead of seeking His death? As for the cleansing of the temple, you know it is wrong to buy and sell within the limits of the temple; but certain members of this body are in favor of it for the revenue they gain from the custom. You cannot deny, if you are honorable, that He did a good work in cleansing the temple of that hord of robbers."

"Are you one of the man's followers?" cried one.

"I did not say I was," Gamaliel replied with dignity, "but I have watched the man and have examined His teaching, and it surpasses anything I have ever heard or studied. If God sent Him to teach, His teaching will survive long after we have passed into oblivion. If God sent Him, you may take this poor man's life, but you cannot destroy the seed He has planted. If He teaches of His own authority, His teaching will die like so many other false teachings have died. So it behooves this body to be careful what you do," and he sat down. Silence reigned for several minutes.

"Brother Gamaliel, you have heard that He claims to be the Son of God. If He is, would He not lay claim to the throne of David?"

"I have taught that the Messiah will come suddenly and ascend the throne of David, and establish Israel in her rightful place among the nations. That idea is pleasant to entertain, but there is always a chance that our conception may be wrong. He may desire to establish a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, instead of a temporal kingdom we look for. A spiritual kingdom would be just as real and more far-reaching and powerful in the end than a temporal kingdom of Israel."

The majority of the members could not follow Gamaliel, and the few that did gave approval by friendly looks and nods, but they were hopelessly in the minority.

"We are not considering when or how the Messiah will come, or what kind of a kingdom He will inaugurate," Caiphas said with scorn. "We do know that this man is not the Messiah, but a disturber in Israel, hence we must put Him away."

"Brethren," Gamaliel said, and there was a note of sadness in his voice, "I do not know what this body will finally decide, but I do know I shall not vote for His death. You will not gain anything by destroying Him. On the other hand, if His teaching is accepted by the people, this temple will come to nought and will decay for want of use, while His precepts will conquer the hearts and minds of men everywhere. I repeat, I will not vote for His death, and every man who votes against Him will have blood on his hands."

Caiphas realized Jesus had a champion in Gamaliel and he was afraid the great leader would convince the majority to his way of thinking; and all Caiphas had done in his zeal for the temple was to no avail. To save himself, he abruptly adjourned the Sanhedrim.

* * *

While the church fathers were planning to put Jesus to death, Mary was waiting in Herod's palace to see Claudia Procula, the wife of Pilate. After Mary had made her errand known to the porter, a slight fear came over her, as she had never met the

wife of a Roman official and did not know how to greet her. Mary expected to meet a stately Roman matron, haughty in bearing and lofty in demeanor.

"Do you wish to see me?" said a soft and musical voice close to Mary.

Mary turned and saw a handsome woman dressed in the finest silk, and there was a charm about her that drew Mary to the woman, and her fear was gone in an instant.

"I come to see you on a strange errand, and if you will, you can help one whom I love dearly."

"In whom are you so deeply interested?" Claudia asked kindly.

Mary hesitated just a moment, as she was afraid when she made her mission known, the Roman matron, who had no knowledge of her God, would only laugh at her. The lives of Jews were held very cheaply by the Romans.

"I am interested in Jesus; He is of Nazareth. He has been teaching for the last three years and doing good on every hand. But He has incurred the hatred of the Sanhedrim, and they are seeking His life. The Jews have no power to put any one to death, and the governor must decide his fate. Can you not speak to Pilate and tell him that Jesus is a good man and to spare His life?" Mary said eagerly.

"Are you one of His followers?" Claudia asked.

"I am and have every reason to be. He healed my body, after all others failed, and He cleansed my soul from sin," Mary replied earnestly. "For these reasons I am anxious that His life may be spared, that He may bring similar blessings to others."

Claudia did not reply, and Mary saw she was disturbed. The Jewish maiden was afraid she had said something that offended the Roman matron.

"Have I displeased you?" Mary asked with fear.

"No, no, you have not displeased me, but I marvel at your love for the man. Such love is not known among us, as our gods do not instill the principles of love in our hearts. I can see why you love the man—He has done inestimable good."

"Do you know Him?" Mary asked eagerly.

"No, I do not know Him; but I heard Him teach in Capernaum, and was impressed with what He said. Some of His teachings I have not forgotten, and ever since I have been longing to enjoy that freedom of soul that He seems to enjoy. If ever there was a man who taught impressively about the true God, He is the man. Our religion is lifeless, and does not satisfy the longings of the heart."

"Claudia," Mary cried, overjoyed that this pagan woman desired to know her Master's teaching, "I know what you want; I felt the same for a long time, but when I knew Him all things were changed, and I am a child of Him who made all things. Do

you want to know the Master and do you want your sins washed away? He will only be too glad to help you."

"I have been seeking for a long time to know for a certainty that your God loves me. I have been praying to Him, but I know not if He hears me or cares for me. I was told He loves the Jews only."

"My Father loves all people, and Jesus loves everyone. If you are eager to be in close relation with Him and have all doubt removed, let us go and seek Him. I am sure we can find Him in the temple teaching."

"I would gladly see Him, but not in the temple. There are many who know me, and you realize it would create a stir if I went to a public place like the temple to discuss a private matter with the teacher. You may say I am cowardly if I pay attention to what others may say, but you appreciate that I am the wife of the governor and must not do anything that would create a disturbance in his realm. I can see Him some other time and place."

"I understand your position, and I am glad you want to know Him. Since you appreciate His teaching you will intercede with the governor that He will spare the Master's life!"

"I shall do all I can. Pilate is a man of justice, and I am sure he will see to it that justice is done to your Master."

"I know you will plead for His life, as you too love His teaching."

"Have no fear," Claudia said **with confidence**, "I will do all I can. A good man must be saved from the fury of His enemies."

Mary was encouraged, as she felt in Claudia she had a friend who could help Jesus. But she also knew how helpless a woman is if a man is determined not to listen to the dictates of his better nature.

Pilate was busy all day with matters pertaining to his office, and Claudia could not see him until late in the evening. During the day she saw all manner of men coming to the palace. Among the numerous callers were many Jews, and by their attire she knew they were priests. What they wanted she could not guess, as the Jews were ever hostile to the Romans.

"I have been waiting all day to see you." Claudia said after they had retired to their apartments.

"And why are you so eager to see me? You saw me this morning."

"I have a favor to ask."

"It shall be granted if at all possible."

"You have heard of the man Jesus who is going about teaching." Pilate looked up in a questioning manner and somewhat startled. Claudia saw his actions, but continued: "The priests are hostile to Him and are seeking to take His life. As you well know, they have not the authority to condemn Him

and will come to you for the final decision. You can save Him, and I urge you to spare His life."

Pilate did not answer, and his silence did not please Claudia.

"Why do you hesitate to answer?" she asked when she could endure the suspense no longer.

"Where did you learn so much about this man?" Pilate asked, evading her question.

"I heard Him teach about a year ago, and was greatly impressed with what He said. This morning Mary, the daughter of Isaac Akiba, of Magdala, was here and begged that you would spare His life. She has been in His company for several months, and she told me of the good He is doing. A man who is helping the people to a better life is a worthy citizen, and all should be done to save Him from those who disagree with Him."

Pilate was acquainted with Isaac and knew him to be a worthy man; besides he was a man of wealth and must not be offended. As to the man Jesus he had heard a contrary tale.

"Are you sure, my dear Claudia, that all you say is true?" Pilate asked after a few minutes.

"I have no reason to doubt it, and if you saw Mary you could not question her word. She is a good woman if there ever was one, and she is so sincere that you can not help but believe her. She has been in

the company of Jesus so long that she has acquired His spirit."

"All that you say of the man is very opposite to what others say of Him."

"Have the priests been to see you?" Claudia asked in alarm. She knew they would attempt to influence his judgment.

"They have," Pilate finally said, "and if half of what you said is true, they are a pack of vile criminals."

"And what did they say?" Claudia asked.

"They said just the contrary to what you said, and they attempted to bribe me so I would condemn the man. I scorned their gold, and said I would see that justice was done the man."

"You are a noble Roman," Claudia cried, "and you will administer justice."

"I will, and those defamers shall be punished."

Claudia felt she had accomplished her purpose, and was glad for the sake of Mary and those who believed on Him. They talked of other matters for a time and then retired for the night.

After leaving the palace of Pilate, Mary and her faithful servant went to the temple. The court in and around the sacred place was dense with people, and the only topic of conversation was Jesus and the wonderful things He did and said. Mary saw Him in the great crowd surrounded by eager listeners. She

marveled that He could teach so efficiently, when He was conscious that there were enemies all around Him. For herself, she had done all she could to spare Him pain; and yet, with it all, she did not have the certainty she desired that no harm would come to Him. But she did not know what else to do. There was one thing she might do—see Caiphas once more and be assured again that he would protect her Master. It was useless for her to seek Caiphas at this hour; for he was busy with the preparation for the feast. She must see him early in the morning.

Since she could not do anything further, and her unceasing labor and anxiety were telling on her strength, a short rest was welcome. So she made her way to Bethany to tell the mother and the other women what she had accomplished. On her arrival she found the women cast down in spirit. The mother was more cheerful, and she was glad to see Mary, as she depended on the young woman in many ways.

“My daughter, you have made every effort to help my son, but you are not satisfied.”

“And why do you say that, mother?” with an effort at cheerfulness.

“Your eyes and voice tell me so. My son is grateful for all you have done, but it is of no avail, and we must prepare our minds and hearts to bear the sorrow.”

They were quiet for a long while. When the first star appeared in the East, there was a buzz of many voices in the street. The Master, the twelve and many of His disciples had returned. All that were with Him were in accord with His teaching and they asked many questions, as they felt a tragedy was approaching and they must make the most of every minute He was with them. When they did not ask questions, Jesus instructed them and repeated many of His teachings so they would remember them after He was gone. As the evening advanced the hearers left one by one, as they were in need of rest. It was imperative that Jesus renew His strength, and He dismissed the few who remained; and He went alone on the hill back of the village. Here He spent the night with the Father, and when morning came He did not return to the village. His disciples inquired for Him, but no man went to seek Him.

"Mother, do you think His enemies might have injured Him?" Mary asked when Jesus had not returned by mid-day.

"No, daughter, have no fear; He is with the Father."

When evening approached the Master came into their midst, but no one asked where He had been. His face was calm, but sad, and He spoke with a gentleness that gripped their hearts.

One of the disciples had been absent all day. Shortly after the Master's return the missing apostle

joined them, and his garments were dusty, which indicated he had just returned from a journey.

Early that morning a priest, who had an evil look in his eyes, arrived in Bethany and consorted with the twelve. After a time he disappeared, and shortly thereafter Judas was also missing. The two met in a bypath outside of Bethany.

“Caiphas has been waiting to see you,” the priest said. “He made you a generous offer, and he is keen to know if you will accept it.”

“No, I can not accept it. I see no reason why I should betray Him, as He has always been kind and generous to me.”

“Compare what this man has done for you and what Caiphas and his friends offer you. They will be your friends, and give you an office in the temple; or if that is not attractive, Caiphas is acquainted with the rulers, and he will see to it that you get an office with the civil powers. You should feel highly honored that the high priest takes so keen an interest in you.”

“It is very kind of Caiphas to take an interest in me, but I have changed my mind. If they want to arrest Him, why have they not done so? He was in the temple for the last three days, and they had every opportunity to take Him. If I would betray Him, I would do the meanest act a man could do. No, I will not betray Him. You have had spies in His company for the past six months and watched every move He

made, and I do not see anything difficult to learn where He will eat the Passover. If you are so eager to take Him, put one of your clever spies to work," and Judas turned toward Bethany.

"I thought you were a man of spirit," the priest said tauntingly. "If the price of ten pieces of silver is not encouraging, I am sure Caiphas will not haggle over a matter so trifling. Come with me to the city and talk it over with Caiphas," and the priest moved toward Jerusalem, and in a few minutes Judas fell in step with him.

"My friend," said the priest in the most flattering tone, "you must not forget that you will do a great service for Israel by being the agent to tell the priests where they can arrest this man. You have seen what He has done and heard what He said. You saw Him raise a disturbance in the temple and you heard Him insult the priests who are the ministers of the Most High. Would a man who claims to teach God's Word do these things? He would not, He would respect both the temple and the priests. And the man who does not should be brought before the Sanhedrim and tried. And the man who can accomplish this will go down in the history of Judaism as one of her great men, one who did a great service for Israel."

Judas was captivated by the smooth tongue of the priest, and he too thought he would do a great service for Israel if he betrayed Jesus.

"If the people continue to follow Him," the priest said, "He will corrupt the people, the temple service will fall into disuse and the people will embrace paganism—and the worship of the true God will be lost to the world. And all this havoc on account of one man. God has been patient with His people, and to-day we are nearer than ever fulfilling His promise, and the Church cannot allow a man to raise a disturbance and destroy what has been done."

Judas had not considered these things, and he too felt the worship of Jehovah must not be discouraged and possibly discontinued. Such a condition would be a calamity to Judaism. In the light of this possibility Judas felt his ingratitude toward Jesus would not be so great after all.

The two men reached the palace of the high priest by mid-day. Caiphas was greatly disturbed when he saw Judas, as he was afraid his well-laid plans were about to crumble.

"Our friend Judas," the priest said, "did not realize before this morning that he is doing the Church a service by informing you where the man will be to-morrow night."

"So, so," said Caiphas. "I am glad he grasps the true significance of the situation. Since I saw you I felt ashamed of myself in offering you ten pieces of silver for so valuable a service. The offer is beggarly, and I will make it thirty pieces. This, I think, is

more in harmony with your service," Caiphas said in a friendly manner.

Judas gave assent by a look that the price was satisfactory.

"I told our friend," the priest said, "that you have many good offices to dispense, and if a place in the temple were not agreeable to him, you were in close touch with the governor and would see to it that he was given a good place with the civil authorities."

"If our friend has ambitions to hold some office, let him name the place desired, and I shall see to it that he gets it," Caiphas said in a manner as though that were a mere trifle.

To gain the further good graces of Judas, Caiphas set before his guests rich food and good wine.

"You will be prompt in reporting to us where He is," Caiphas said after his guests had eaten.

"You can depend on me," Judas said with confidence. "I do not know where He will be tomorrow night, but just as soon as I do, I will report."

"That will be splendid," Caiphas said as he led his visitors to the door. "After tomorrow you will be a great man in Israel," Caiphas said to Judas.

The words of the high priest kept ringing in the ears of Judas as he went toward Bethany, and he felt he was immensely important.

The next morning Judas thought he valued the Master at His real value. The man with whom he had associated for the past three years was not so great a personage after all, and in the final analysis He had only raised a disturbance and had not established anything of permanence. Judas convinced himself that he was not committing a crime by betraying the Master, and if any wrong might be attached to his act, the Church would pardon it.

Judas heard the Master instruct John and Peter to go to the city and make ready to eat the Passover. Jesus and His friends set out for Jerusalem, and it was an easy matter for Judas to detach himself from the crowd and follow the two apostles.

After Judas learned where the Passover was to be eaten, he hastened to the palace of Caiphas.

"What news, my friend?" the high priest said as he greeted his spy.

"I know where He will tarry this evening; it is not so far from here."

"That is splendid news," Caiphas said warmly. "You are surely a true son of Israel and have her great institutions at heart. You shall be handsomely rewarded for your services."

"Where can I find the guard when I come this evening- They must be ready on the instant and do as I direct."

"They will be here awaiting your instructions. At what hour shall they be ready?"

"Any time after sunset. I do not know the precise hour; they must wait until I come."

"It shall be done as you say," Caiphas said graciously.

Judas had time on his hands, and he wandered about the city. He would join the Master after he had gone to the room prepared for Him and learn, if possible, the plans of Jesus. As the day wore on, doubt crept over Judas and he questioned if the priests were not leading him into a trap; and after he had betrayed Jesus they might attempt to kill Him. He would not be a partner to such a foul crime, even though at heart he did not love Jesus and considered Him a disturber in Israel.

"If they should attempt to injure Him," Judas mused, "He can protect Himself. He has subdued crowds with a look, and He can do so again. Besides He has powers they do not understand, and if He so wills, they will fall at His side like dead men, and He will go from their midst unharmed."

Caiphas was busy during the day convincing certain members of the Sanhedrim to his way of thinking, and in making preparations to apprehend Jesus. He obtained the consent of the Roman authority to place a guard at his command. It required much

cunning and considerable gold to meet his end, but he was determined not to fail.

After sunset the Master and the eleven went to the upper room in the home of John Mark to eat the Passover. The mother and Mary were guests in the same house. A solemnity that was oppressive pervaded the home; all felt that a tragedy was about to be enacted, but just how no one understood. As the evening wore on, Mary could not bear to be in the house; the very air seemed to choke her; she had to do something or she would cry out for very agony of spirit. She summoned her faithful servant and went out of doors. Once on the street she must do something definite, and determined to see Caiphas and get his assurance that her beloved Master would not be ill treated.

As they approached the palace of the high priest, a man, in a great hurry, passed them. Mary thought it was Judas, but was not certain, as their torch did not give a strong light.

"Was that Judas?" Mary asked.

"I am not certain, but it looked like him."

Mary called the man, but he did not answer and continued on his way. She questioned what he was doing on the street this time of the evening. Why was he not in the upper room with the Master? Could it be possible that he was on an unfriendly errand? She at once dismissed the idea as unworthy, as she could?

not conceive of any one, and especially one of the twelve, who would do the least unfriendly act toward Jesus. When they reached the palace Mary saw many people about the place and Roman soldiers were loitering around the court. There was an excitement everywhere that Mary did not comprehend, and it was evident something out of the ordinary was transpiring.

"I want to speak to Caiphas," Mary said to the porter.

"Have you an appointment?" the porter asked.

"No," and Mary was surprised he asked the question.

"I am afraid you cannot see him, as he is very busy."

"Will you tell Caiphas that Mary, the daughter of Isaac Akiba, of Magdala, wishes to see him for a few minutes?" Mary said, and used a gold coin to assist the porter in making her wish known.

"I shall see what can be done. Wait here until I return." He returned in a few minutes and beckoned Mary to follow him. He led her to a small room near the door. "You wait here," the porter said, all smiles, "the high priest will see you directly."

Caiphas was a long time coming. The delay, however, gave her opportunity to see and hear much of what was going on. Many went in and out of the pal-

ace, and all were unduly excited. All were talking, and every now and then she heard the name of Jesus mentioned. Some mentioned his name kindly and others with derision. It was clear to Mary, after a time, that all the commotion and discussion was due to her Master. But why was this storm-center in the palace of the high priest, the home of the man who had promised her that no harm would come to Jesus?

Caiphas finally entered the room where Mary was waiting, but he was not the sleek and suave Caiphas she met a few days before. He was laboring under an excitement that fairly distorted his features.

"What is it you wish?" he asked, making a great effort to be calm.

"I am a woman and see danger where perhaps there is no danger, but I want your assurance again that you will see to it that the teacher is not harmed during the feast."

Mary saw that he was angry beyond words and that it took all his will-power to control himself.

"A few days ago I gave you a promise to that effect. You must understand, however, I can not rule the Sanhedrim and they have, for the time being, gotten beyond my power to guide them aright."

"Is there a possibility that they will seek to harm Him?" Mary cried with alarm.

"I know not; I hope they will not use force to compel Him to cease teaching," Caiphas said blandly,

having gotten himself in hand. He realized that he must be careful, or he would be foiled by a woman and all his plans would come to naught.

"Caiphas," Mary said with all her soul, "what is there in His teaching that the priests object to?"

"They say He is leading the people away from the true faith, and that He is raising a disturbance in Israel. You appreciate, my daughter, the temple and its worship must not be ruined or even disturbed; and if one does these things, you know the penalty."

Mary shuddered; she knew His enemies would inflict the severest cruelty.

"Caiphas, you officiate in the temple and represent Jehovah to us. We look to you for all that is good and noble," Mary said rising and looking him in the face, and her look made him tremble. "You have heard Him teach and you can not deny that He has done ought. or said one word that should have incurred the enmity of you and the priests. He has made no effort to raise a disturbance, but His whole work has been for the betterment of man. You know He is sent from God to teach, and if the ruling powers harm Him, or should go to the extreme end to take His life—His blood will be on your hands, and a million sacrifices can not remove the stain. Which is the better," she pleaded, "to listen to Him, or at least not permit Him to be harmed, or to have a sin on your soul that can not be removed?"

Caiphas was greatly affected by her pleading, and he knew only too well what he should do. He knew the man was teaching the truths of the Most High and should be protected by him. For the moment he wished he had not planned to take His life, but the next instant his avaricious soul goaded him on and he determined to pursue the course laid out.

The porter stood in the doorway.

Caiphas looked at him in a questioning manner.

"Malchus must see you at once."

"Just a moment." Caiphas had to rid himself first of this troublesome woman.

"I shall do all I can; you come to see me tomorrow, and I can tell you more," and he made way for her to go.

"Judas is without and waiting," Malchus said.

"Is the guard ready and shall I go with them?"

"That woman is a pest, but she is a friend of the disturber. If I offended her, she might suspect our plans and tell Him and He would elude us. Make haste for fear of our plans miscarrying," Caiphas urged.

"If I fail, do not blame me," Malchus said with slight temper.

"Follow me," Malchus said to the centurion, and that official and his men followed Malchus, and the whole band was led by Judas.

When Mary came out of the palace she saw a man standing in the shadow who resembled Judas, but she could not speak to him, as the people jostled her and each minute she got farther away from the man. She and Tobia finally got in the street. They had gone but a short distance when the clatter of many feet caused them to turn. A body of soldiers were coming out of the courtyard and coming in her direction. She stepped in a side street and let the crowd pass. At the head of the band she saw the man who stood in the shadow a few minutes before, and again she thought he resembled Judas; but she could not conceive what he was doing in the company of a Roman guard. She followed in the wake of the band.

"They are going in our direction. It must be a disturbance of some proportions, or they would not send so many soldiers," Mary said.

"I know not," Tobia answered. "I did not hear of any tumult."

When they entered the street of Mark and approached his house, it flashed across Mary that the guard might be on the way to arrest Jesus and the apostles. The band halted and the leader went to the upper room. She recognized the leader—it was Judas.

"Is he going to betray Jesus?" Mary groaned and made an effort to get through the crowd, but the soldiers pushed her roughly aside.

"Shall I send the men up?" Malchus asked when Judas came down.

"He is not there."

"Not there!" cried Malchus, laying hold on Judas. "Are you trifling with the high priest? Is this a ruse to get money and then fail us?" with anger.

"Is this my fault? I was waiting a long time, but you did not come."

"I had to see Caiphas before leaving," Malchus said in self-defense, "and he was detained by a woman who seemed to have urgent business with him."

"Then do not blame me if the plan does not carry out."

"But we must find Him. Have you no idea where He might be?" Malchus said in milder tones.

"I do not know for a certainty, but I know where He frequently goes. Tell every man to put his torch out and follow in silence."

Malchus gave the order and they followed Judas. He led them outside the city to a garden where Jesus was wont to go and pray. When the company was within fifty paces to the entrance, Judas said to Malchus:

"You tarry here and I will see if He is in the garden. Let there be perfect silence, and when I am certain He is here, I shall clap my hands three times in quick succession. You then light your torches and enter the garden."

"As you say," Malchus said, and Judas disappeared into the dark.

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After the band was gone, Mary ran up the steps to the upper room and found it empty.

"The Master is gone," Mary said on her return. "Do you think it possible that He went away so they can not find Him?"

"I can not answer, I imagine Judas has an idea where the Master went."

"Whither did they go?" Mary asked excitedly.

"They went down the street, but they put their torches out, and I cannot see which way they went."

"Let us follow them; we must overtake them and warn the Master that a cruel mob is seeking to lay hold on Him."

The two set out in the direction the band had taken, but they could not see or hear them. They went down one street and up another, and finally the two were lost in the city.

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Judas could easily find the garden in the dark, as he had been there a number of times. At the entrance of the garden he saw eight of his companions, and they were in deep sleep. He passed into the garden, and a little farther on he found three more of his friends, and they too were asleep. But He whom Judas was seeking was not there. What is that! Judas

was startled; something unfamiliar was moving toward him. Judas crept to the side of the path. The Master was surrounded with something that chilled the blood in the betrayer's veins, and he crouched lower in the bushes as the Master passed by. He saw Jesus look at the three sleeping figures and then retrace His steps. By this time Judas had recovered from his fright and followed the Master at a distance.

Jesus stopped and fell on the ground and prayed long and fervently, and then all was silent. The quiet was so intense and prolonged that Judas felt the Master was dead, and for the moment he was glad, as he would be relieved of his bargain. But Judas was not to escape so easily the compact he had made. A light that dazzled Judas came to the side of the Master. "Fear not, the Father is well pleased with the work you have done; and you shall be rewarded before the sun will rise the second time. Take fresh courage; He will give you strength to endure the agony. Suffer this once for the truth you have taught, and all men will believe you were sent by the Father to make clear the great plan of salvation."

Judas had never heard so strange and yet so sweet a voice. He was affrighted and gladly would have left the place, but his feet refused to carry him from the spot. Neither could he take his eyes off the Master and the light that surrounded Him.

"The Father's will be done," Judas heard the Master say. After a time Jesus rose from the ground and went toward the three with the firm step of a conqueror.

Judas recovered himself and made a slight detour and by the time Jesus had the eleven aroused, Judas was at the entrance to the garden. He gave the signal and a dozen torches were lit and the band moved toward the garden.

When the light of the torches fell on the face of Jesus the betrayer stepped forth, not like a man, but like a beast bent on destruction, and kissed the man who had been his best friend for three years. When the cold lips touched the cheek that was still wet with blood from the recent agony, the Master turned and looked with pity at the fallen man.

"Judas!" was all He said, but the manner of His saying touched the heart of the criminal, and he would have welcomed instant death rather than see that face again, which was the sweetest he had ever seen. The guard fell back when they saw Jesus and heard Him utter the one word.

"Whom seek ye?" Jesus finally asked, addressing the centurion.

"Jesus of Nazareth."

"I am He."

The centurion looked at Jesus, but did not say a word or give the order to take Him.

"You said we were to apprehend a criminal, a man who raised a sedition. You must have made a mistake; this man is not a criminal—He is not unlike a god " the centurion said to Malchus.

"You arrest Him; you do not know the man. You are told to do as I direct," Malchus said with confusion.

"Your order shall be obeyed, but I do it against my will," and the centurion gave the order to take Him and bind Him.

The band entered the city and made their way to the palace of Annas. Mary and Tobia heard the noise of the soldiers and went in the direction from whence the noise came. They met the band, and Mary saw Jesus was guarded by two soldiers.

"Master!" she cried and rushed toward Him, but one of the soldiers pushed her aside.

"I must speak to Him, He needs my help," Mary said when she recovered herself.

"We shall give Him all the help He needs," one of the soldiers retorted with a laugh.

"Mary, what are you doing here this hour of the night?" a voice asked that was familiar to her. She looked up and John was at her side.

"It is unseemly for me to be out this hour of the night, but I had a presentment they were going to harm our Master. I have done all I possibly could to avert it, but I failed."

"This hour had to come," John said.

"John," Mary said, "do you not see that He is in the hands of Roman soldiers, who do not know what it is to have mercy? Where are the rest of the apostles? Can you not rescue Him?" with frenzy.

"The rest of the apostles were frightened and are scattered. Our Master, whom we love with our whole being, must suffer that His truth may live. He explained this to us this evening during the Paschal supper."

"How must He suffer?" Mary asked.

"With His life."

"At the hands of these pagans and on the cross?"

"Yes, it must be so." This confession was like a stab in the heart of John.

On reaching the palace of Annas two of the soldiers took the Master to the ex-high priest.

"You are as sly a fox as I have ever seen," Annas said with a sneer, when the two men were alone, "but you are caught at last." Annas paused and waited for Jesus to reply, but He was silent.

"You have been most daring for a long time and have done much mischief. The chosen people of God have had to contend with disturbers before this day, but you have surpassed them all." The haughty Jew paused again, as he was certain the insult would bring a retort, but the accused did not deign to reply.

"Other would-be teachers have taught in the name of God, but none had the consummate courage to call himself the Son of God. Do you not fear the wrath of Jehovah, and that He will demand your life for your blasphemy?" The ex-high priest waited for a reply or some word of self-defense, but he was disappointed.

"What others have told me of you, I looked for you to defend yourself like a man, and that which I accused you of you would admit or deny. But you are speechless and your silence convicts you. You are not worthy of consideration, and should be tried for your misdoings," and Annas raised his hand to strike a gong at his side.

"My friend," and the hand of Annas was stayed in mid-air, "you said I called myself the Son of God. You are a man of understanding and have studied the Scriptures for years. You know what the Son of Man must do to fulfill His mission—have I or have I not done what Scriptures say? Have I done ought that is harmful to Israel, or has my work been for the good of the people? Put aside your hate and avarice for a moment and allow your heart—the honest part of yourself, to answer." Jesus paused, but Annas did not reply, and he did not have the courage to look at the Master.

"You desire my destruction not because you hate me, or what I taught, as you know I taught only the

truth; but you desire my death so that you can continue to debase the temple and increase your wealth, which already is enormous. Friend Annas," Jesus said ever so kindly, "is all this worthy of you, a man who has reached his best years and who has been high priest? What will you do with all the shekel's when you are gathered to your fathers? Come, be a man, and before you offer the sacrifice and eat the Passover on the morrow confess that which you know is wrong and get right with Jehovah."

The arrogance and haughtiness had left Annas and he was limp with shame. It had been many years since Annas had looked into his heart of hearts, and all he saw was displeasing to God. Without looking up he struck a gong and two servants entered. He waved his hand that they should remove the prisoner.

Should he follow the young man and save Him from the hands of Caiphas, and acknowledge His teaching, which he knew was from God? The suggestion was a noble one, but Annas did not have the courage to execute it. The moment was passed when he could have redeemed himself and defended Jesus. The prisoner was on His way to Caiphas.

"This was an easy night's work," said one of the guards as he came out of the palace of Caiphas.

"Easy, yes, so far as resistance goes; but it was the most difficult task I performed in my service of

twenty years. Did you ever see a man more majestic in bearing or more innocent in look? He had no hate even for the vile betrayer, and every look He gave us was one of pity. The gods look not with favor on this night's business," said the centurion with a sigh.

"It is not for me to say," replied the soldier to his superior; "I simply obeyed orders."

"True, so did I; but I would much rather have arrested that evil-looking Malchus and those he works for than this man, who is innocent of crime." Thus conversed the two soldiers on their return to quarters.

On reaching the palace of Caiphas, John and Mary were admitted with the guard, as John knew the porter.

"The Master will be released in a few minutes," Mary said to John with triumph.

"Caiphas is an enemy of Jesus, and it is not likely that he will treat Him with consideration," John said.

"The high priest gave me assurance early this evening that he would use every means to protect Jesus. He is a man of God, and would not lie to me."

"You do not know the deceit of these men, and he has an evil heart."

Mary clung to the hope that Caiphas would be kind to her Master and set Him free.

"On what charge did they take Him and bind Him?" Mary asked.

"The priests are cunning and can invent all sorts of offences and crimes."

"But the Master will convince them that He is not guilty of any crime, and if they persist in persecuting Him, He has power to free Himself. There is nothing impossible with Him."

"The Master is never angry when He is abused; but He is angry in behalf of others. He never defends Himself, but He defends others," John said.

"Then you think He will not defend Himself?" Mary said with alarm.

"Our friend and teacher came to tell the world the love of the Father. The world has not received His teaching and His love, because there is too much hate and self-love in the world. If the Master would repudiate all He said, the priests no doubt would set Him free, but He will not—He will die for the love He taught. And if He dies He will conquer the world."

"But the suffering He must endure!" Mary said with deepest anguish.

"Hush! it pierces my soul when I think of it. All we can do is pray that He will not lose hope and faith."

On reaching the palace they led Jesus to Caiphas, as he was anxious to see Jesus alone. The high priest

desired the one opportunity to insult and gloat over Him as his captive.

When the two men met they looked at each other for several minutes in silence. Jesus was calm, and there was immeasurable pity in His face for the misguided official. The magnanimous bearing of Jesus would have won any man but Caiphas. He, on the contrary, was overbearing in manner and sneering in look. He gazed at his captive with malignant satisfaction.

"I have long wanted the opportunity to see you," Caiphas said scoffingly after a time. "Few men of low estate have the boldness you possess, and yet, boldness is admired, though it be in an enemy. No man ever had the audacity to disturb the affairs in the temple, but you did it on two occasions with the greatest insolence. You had the affrontry to insult in the temple the priests and teachers of Jehovah, an offense which no man ever had the courage to do. You taught without the authority of the priests, and you instructed the people in many things that are against the law. None but the most ignorant would have dared to do these things. You boasted that you would destroy the temple and raise it in three days. And you made yourself equal with God—this is blasphemy and worthy of death."

Caiphas paused in his tirade and waited for Jesus to reply to the unjust charges, but the captive did

not respond. Instead he looked with profoundest pity on the frenzied official.

"Are the things I said true, or do you deny them?" Caiphas asked after the silence became unbearable.

"Caiphas," said Jesus with the greatest gentleness, "on the morrow you will offer the sin offering for Israel. You as God's servant will enter the holy of holies. You have purified yourself that you may perform this high duty, and yet you desire my life. Is the deed you contemplate worthy the high priest of Jehovah?" The Master's words were freighted with the deepest love for His accuser.

His love was so kind and great that Caiphas, for the first time, was undone. He knew not how to answer, and for an instant his better nature came to the surface, but it was only for an instant, as he could not brook failure in his evil course, or endure the ridicule of his fellow members of the Sanhedrim. He clapped his hands and the guards came into the room and led Jesus out.

While Jesus was closeted with Caiphas, a number of the Sanhedrim were assembled in a large chamber in the palace, and Jesus was conducted into their midst. Caiphas quickly recovered himself and was the leading spirit of the body. John and Mary gained access to the audience room and saw and heard how the business was carried on. That the whole proced-

ure was premeditated was evident to the two. That the members of the Sanhedrim were not attempting to administer justice was only too clear. And Mary was amazed that Caiphas had deceived her so grossly.

The members of the Sanhedrim abused the Master, but He showed not the least resentment; and pity for the poor misguided priests was in every look. His calm demeanor enraged His triers and cut their black souls to the quick. They brought in witnesses to justify their action, but they did not agree and the members became confused. There was one question the accused had to be asked, and the moment had arrived when it must be asked. A hush fell on the crowd and each man was tense with excitement.

Caiphas assumed his loftiest air and with a touch of condescension he asked: "Art thou the Son of God?"

All waited with bated breath, as on the answer hung the life or liberty of the accused. Jesus, in all meekness, replied with a firm voice: "I am."

Caiphas flew into a rage and with dramatic effect tore his robes and cried: "This man is a blasphemer; what further evidence need we? He is worthy of death."

The members gathered courage from the bravado of Caiphas, and with loud voices confirmed the words of their leader. Even the guards caught the reckless spirit and smote Jesus and spat in His face.

"John!" Mary cried, "where are the disciples? Can you not rescue Him from these evil men? See how they abuse Him. Can nothing be done to help Him?" she cried with anguish.

"Among so many I am powerless to rescue Him. As for the rest of the apostles, I do not know where they are." He was chagrined that he could not help the one he loved, but events had moved so fast that nothing could be done in defense of the Master.

The first signs of dawn appeared, and comparative calm reigned in the palace. In a haughty manner Caiphas announced to the members: "The man is worthy of death, and He shall pay the penalty. Take Him to the palace of Herod that Pilate may pass sentence."

"Come," Mary said to John, and they left the palace.

"Let us hasten to the palace," Mary said to John. "I must see Claudia. We must make another effort to save His life."

"She is a pagan and cares not for Jesus," John said.

"Ah, you do not know. She too loves the Master. I saw her two days ago, and she promised to do all she could to save His life. She assured me Pilate was a man of justice. Let us quicken our steps; we must reach the palace ahead of these murderers."

The porter recognized Mary and conducted her to the apartment of Claudia.

"Mary," cried Claudia, as she embraced her, "the Jews are clamoring for His death. They have been here and tried to persuade the governor to pronounce the death sentence and not make an inquiry."

"Did he consent?" Mary asked eagerly.

"No, he will make a thorough investigation and justice shall be done."

"Then you think there is a possibility of saving the Master?"

"I think we have a right to think so. But one can never tell what a man in office will do. Circumstances often arise that compel a man to change his mind."

There was a great confusion in the street, and the two women rushed to the window. The crowd was nearing the palace, and the central figure in the mob was Jesus. His hands were bound and on either side of Him was a guard. The mob jeered the Master and said all manner of evil about Him. They led Him to the Praetorium, and Pilate came out to administer justice.

The governor asked for witnesses and a number of men came forward. One accused Him of this and another made an entirely different statement. It was evident to Pilate that the whole proceeding lacked cohesion, and that the Jews brought the man before him because they hated Him. During the

confusion that followed Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, and he at once determined to send Him to Herod and thus regain the friendship of Herod and be relieved of passing sentence on the accused, and at the same time grant the wish of Claudia. But Herod was as cunning as Pilate, and refused to judge Jesus.

After the governor had sent Jesus away, Claudia rushed to Pilate. "Did you condemn Him?" she asked eagerly.

"No; He is from the province of Galilee and a subject of Herod; he may judge Him."

"What if Herod should condemn Him?"

"I can not prevent anything he may do."

They heard a faint murmur of voices, and it grew louder every minute.

"They are returning with the prisoner," Claudia said as she clutched the arm of Pilate. "Promise me that you will save Him. He is a good man and has not raised a disturbance, as they say. Why should a good man die because He has enemies?"

"I will do all I can," Pilate said as the half-crazed mob entered the Praetorium for the second time.

Pilate took Jesus aside; as he desired to question Him and to make sure if the man had or had not done wrong.

"They accuse you of being a king; are you a king?" Pilate asked kindly. From the first he was

impressed with the bearing of the man, and thought He looked more majestic than a Cæsar.

"I want to conquer the hearts of men and women with love. If I am accused of being a king because I win men with love, then I am a king."

Pilate did not understand Jesus. "And where is your kingdom?"

"My kingdom does not consist of lands and cities. My kingdom is in the hearts of men."

Being a pagan, Pilate did not comprehend Jesus, but he was impressed with the sincerity of the man. And he would see to it that justice was done Him.

"I have examined the man and find nothing worthy of death," Pilate said when he again faced the mob, and, turning to the prisoner, he cried: "Behold the man!" and there was genuine admiration in the words of Pilate. "He is innocence itself, and He has done nothing worthy of punishment."

"Away with Him!" cried the mob with increased fury. "He desires to be king of the Jews, but we hate Him and despise Him!"

"I will chastise Him and release Him," Pilate said, and the guard led the Master away.

"He set Him free," Claudia said to Mary as Jesus was led within.

"May Jehovah's blessing be on your husband," Mary said with gratitude.

The two women gave thanks that He was saved from His enemies. The next instant the tumult of the crowd caused them to rush to the window, and they saw a man was led forth.

"Who is that?" Mary cried clutching the arm of her friend. "See the crown of thorns on His head and the blood trickling down His face. Oh!" she cried in agonized horror, "it is the Master!"

The significance of the proceedings flashed upon Mary, and she rushed from the palace.

"Tobia," Mary commanded hurriedly, "go to the home of John Mark and bring the mother, and do not delay," and Mary went out of the court and joined John.

"Tobia, do you know where my son is?" the mother asked frantically when the servant came into the house.

"Yes; come with me."

"Where is He?" the mother asked again after they were out on the street.

"In the palace of Pilate."

"And why is He there? Who took Him there?" she asked.

"The priests sent Him there, I am told; but I do not understand it all," he said, evading her question.

The import of His presence in the palace dawned upon her, and she groaned in spirit.

"Let us hurry; He needs me."

When they reached the palace, Jesus was being led out of the Praetorium.

"Behold your king!" Pilate said.

"Away with Him!"

"What shall I do with this just man; I find no fault in Him?"

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" the crowd shouted.

"Do you want to crucify your king?" he asked.

"We have no king but Cæsar, and if you set this man free, you are not Cæsar's friend."

This accusation of the crowd was unlooked for by Pilate, and he could not have it reported in Rome that he was not a friend of Cæsar. But he did not want to condemn the man, as He was not guilty of crime.

"This man is not guilty of any crime, and I will not condemn Him." Pilate said with determination.

"If you think Him worthy of death, take Him, but I will wash my hands of the whole matter." And Pilate washed his hands before the crowd.

"His blood will be on us and our children," the priests cried.

"If His blood is on you and your children, it is only a just punishment for your crime," and Pilate went into the palace.

Secretly the priests were jubilant that the disturber, the imposter and the blasphemer was about to

pay the penalty for His daring. They returned to the temple and felt that Judaism was safe once more.

The crowd waited for the criminals to be brought out of the Praetorium. The Master led the procession, and He excited the pity of many. The crowd in general, however, was callous and made a holiday of the sad event. Wagers were made as to which of the unfortunates would be crucified first. Others wagered which one would live the longest.

The mother and Mary rushed to the side of the Master when He was brought out on the street, but the mother hardly recognized the haggard, blood-stained features of her son; and a heart-rending groan escaped her. Mary saw His cross was too heavy for Him and was in the act of helping Him, when she saw His tunic cling to his body in red bands.

"Oh!" she cried, and her hands fell to her side and a faintness crept over her. "How can men be so cruel? Where are the men who promised me He would be spared? Are all men wicked, and have they forgotten God that they are bent on inflicting the most cruel punishment on Him!" She rushed to His side that she might not see the marks on His back.

"Do not weep for me," the Master said as the women tried to comfort Him. "Wicked men have their way this hour, and the Father will give me grace to endure the torture."

"Dear Master," Mary pleaded, "can you not dis-comfort these men that they will set you free and you escape the agony?"

"To finish my work I must taste death. Take-comfort in the thought that I will rise again and triumph in the end."

Mary did not understand Him, as her mind was benumbed with grief.

The train was moving slower and slower, as the strength of Jesus was ebbing away under the heavy burden. Mary tried to assist Him, but her feeble effort was useless, and the next moment He was overcome with His burden. The crowd jeered Him and cried that He was a coward; others pitied Him, but did not have the courage to assist Him. The guard lifted the cross and roughly assisted the Master to His feet and again placed the cross on His shoulder and urged Him to move faster. The procession had gone only a few rods when the weight of the cross again pressed Him to the ground. Mary saw the guard was about to strike Him, and she stepped to the side of the Master that the blow might fall on her.

"Sir, He is exhausted. They beat Him and His strength is spent." The pity and love in the woman's face excited a response in the guard, and He commanded one of the crowd to carry the cross for the fallen criminal.

The procession now moved faster. The two women continued at His side and assisted Him, as His steps were halting though the cross was removed. The mother's heart was bleeding with pain, though she knew this hour had to be before His work was complete. Now that the moment was here she gladly would have died for Him, but it was not to be so. The two had often spoken of this hour and of the return to life, but the mother never fully understood it, as none had ever returned from the land beyond. Mary was silent for most of the way, as she felt her presence was more comforting than any words she might offer.

The sad company reached the place all too soon where the holes had been dug to receive the three crosses. The bearer of Jesus' cross was directed to place it near the middle hole. Callous guards pushed the women aside and laid rough hands on Him. The tunic, which adhered to the open wounds, was torn from Him with a jerk. The Master turned pale with pain, but He did not utter a sound.

The executioners seized Him by the arms and roughly threw Him on the cross. The two women bent over Him and wiped the sweat from His face.

"Ready?" asked the executioner, as he raised the mallet and placed the nail in the palm of the Master's hand. The other nodded, and a dull sound fell on the ears of the women as the nails were driven home.

The work was done in a few seconds. Every muscle twitched and every nerve tingled as the nails pierced His tender hands, but He did not utter a cry. They quickly crossed His feet and drove a sharp iron through the feet near the ankles. As the guards raised the cross the women buried their faces in their hands and waited for the dull thud that would tell them the cross was in place. It seemed ages to the women until the cross was upright, and as it slid in place and the weight of the body was on His palms, a suppressed groan escaped His lips, and the pain in His face was indescribable.

The two women went a few paces in front of the cross, where they could see His face. His pain was excruciating, but He did not complain. The prayer of the women was that the end might come quickly.

Many left after their morbid curiosity was satisfied; others tarried to see if the teacher had power to come down from the cross and show the people that He was the Son of God, as He said He was; others, urged on by the priests, jeered the sufferer. The few that loved Him watched in silence near the cross.

After a time darkness crept over the land.

"Is it night?" the mother asked.

"It is not the hour for the darkness to appear, and I know not what it means, unless the heavens are mourning for Him," Mary said.

"I know not," the mother replied. "God is on His throne, and does all for the best."

In the meantime the darkness increased, and all that was visible were the three crosses silhouetted against the dark sky. Of a sudden the intense stillness that pervaded all was pierced by a heart-rending cry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!"

"Oh, has God forsaken Him after He has suffered all this?" Mary asked in anguish. "Mother, is it possible that God forsook Him after leading Him all these years?"

"It can not be," the mother said, half rising; "His word has always been true, and my son has been in the closest fellowship with Him. It may be that my boy only thought so—His suffering is intense."

Mary's mind was assailed with many doubts. Was all that she believed a delusion? Was all that she had been taught untrue and the work of an insincere man? Then she thought of His beautiful life and the good He had done, and she could not deny the truth. Her meditation was interrupted by the Master.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," The Master uttered the words with the utmost calmness. That moment all doubts fled from the mind of Mary and her spirit felt like crying for joy—her Master had triumphed and was with the Father. Now

His suffering was over, men could no longer jeer at Him, but had to admire Him that He died for the ideal for which He lived. Her exaltation was interrupted, the earth trembled under her feet, rocks tumbled from their moorings and men fell on their faces and cried to the unseen for protection. Mary and the mother felt composed amid the confusion, and at that moment would have welcomed death so that they might be with Him whom they loved.

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There was another scene, more pathetic than the one enacted by the unbelievers and pagans on the mount of crucifixion. When Jehovah drew the midnight veil across the heavens, a fear gripped the priests of the temple, and they questioned each other what all this meant. The timid and ignorant asked: "What portends this darkness?" The leaders with a spurious laugh said it was nothing, as the sun had been darkened before. Their remaining confidence was rudely shocked when the earth began to tremble. Darkness and an earthquake at the same time was unusual, and they had no explanation to offer. And when the darkness was at its height, there was a sound of rending cloth, and the immense veil in front of the holy of holies was torn in two by an unseen hand. Terror fell on all, and to increase their fright the middle candle in the candlestick went out, and the doors of the temple swung open of their own ac-

cord. Men rushed hither and thither, and asked all sorts of questions their neighbors could not answer.

The confusion of the priests was increased when Judas rushed into their midst.

"Here is your blood-stained silver!" Judas cried in terror; "you betrayed me."

"Take your silver, we do not want it," they cried, holding up their hands.

"You hypocrites who stand in God's temple. You promised me on your word of honor that you would not take His life. Do you think for one instant I would have betrayed Him if I had suspected you wanted His life? I am an ingrate, but I would not sacrifice a man's life for thirty pieces of silver, nor for all the silver in the treasury of the temple. But His blood is on you—you killed the Redeemer of Israel."

"Go away! Go away!" the priests cried. "Our misery is unbearable as it is."

"You servants of the evil one have made it impossible for me to be forgiven; but you will suffer a like penalty."

"Be gone! Be gone!" the priests cried.

Judas threw the money at their feet and rushed from the temple.

Caiphas, who appeared calm to the onlooker, was finally overcome with terror and fled to the palace of his father-in-law.

"What meaneth all this?" Caiphas asked in a trembling voice.

"I know not, but there is no cause for alarm," Annas said with a semblance of his usual arrogance.

"Father," Caiphas said with terror, "the temple veil was torn in two, the middle candle went out and the great doors of the temple swung back, and yet no man touched them."

Annas did not offer an explanation of these strange happenings.

"Father, father," Caiphas said in a hoarse whisper, "do you think He might have been the Messiah after all, and thus we and all Israel are lost because we rejected Him?"

Annas buried his face in his hands, and after a space his frame shook as though he had the ague.

"I know not," he finally said. "If He is the Messiah, no sin offering can atone for our crime,"

Tears rolled down the cheeks of the arrogant, defiant and over-bearing high priest. "I am afraid He is the long-expected Consolation of Israel, and we refused to accept Him," Caiphas said.

Just then the black veil was lifted and the last rays of the sun peeped into the room where the two men who were responsible for His death were seated. They were most wretched objects, as they realized they had committed the crime of crimes, and both felt there was no hope of ever being forgiven.

On the mount of crucifixion there was a scene the very opposite of that in the palace. When the darkness was lifted and the last beams of the sun illumined the mount, the crushed hearts of the women were made glad. They did not behold a distorted and terrified face of a man who was afraid of death, but they saw a smile of joy and absolute triumph in every silent feature.

"Mother, mother!" Mary cried, "see how beautiful He looks. The Father did not forsake Him; He received the spirit of the Master."

"I knew it would be thus; but the suffering it cost was almost unbearable. One thing we know, we shall be with Him before long, never to be separated again."

Their solemn, yet joyous, intercourse was interrupted by the arrival of Joseph and his friends. With loving hands they took Him from the cross and laid Him in the rock-hewn sepulcher.

After the friends were gone the women looked at the stone that closed the sepulcher. "It is not strong enough to hold Him," the mother said to herself.

"My heart is torn and bleeding," the mother said, "but I am glad He did not falter and died for the ideals He believed and taught. With all my grief, I am proud of my son."

"What mother in Israel would not be proud if her son died for an ideal? I am proud to have been one

of His friends, and I loved Him with my whole soul, which was the least I could do—as He made my life complete.”

The twilight deepened, and it was necessary that they retire somewhere for the night.

“Shall we go to the home of Mark or to Bethany?” Mary asked.

“I want to stay near Him a little longer,” the mother pleaded.

“Shall I order the tent so we can stay for the night?”

“I would be glad if you did so,” the mother said gratefully.

“I shall be glad to stay, and I am sure He would be glad to know we stayed near Him,” and Mary directed Tobia to spread the tent in the garden where the sepulcher was.

The faithful servant made haste and in an incredibly short time returned and pitched the tent for the women. Tobia tethered his camel and made a covering for himself a short distance from the tent that he might be near the women.

The two women were too full of grief to hold conversation after they were settled in their tent. Each was busy with her own heart. Mary was not yet reconciled to the loss of her Master. No one could be like Him in gentleness and goodness. No one could teach

the people like He taught them, and what would they do without Him?

The mother's thoughts were along entirely different lines. A few events had to take place before His mission was complete. Would He rise the third day, as He said He would, or would He not? She knew He had said so, and hitherto His word had always been true, but this time doubt assailed her. No one returned from the land of the unknown unless some one called them. Who would call her son? None of the apostles could and there was no prophet in Israel, or was it possible that her son would raise His own body and come from the grave a victor over death? The kind hands that laid Him in the tomb did not think He would rise again, as they buried Him as they buried other men. If they had believed He would rise they would not have wrapped His limbs in grave clothes and laid His body on the cold rocks. Rather they would have made a bed of the finest down and covered His body with the finest linen. They thought He would sleep the sleep of the just, because they did not understand Him and did not look for His resurrection.

After all was quiet, the mother wanted another look at the tomb, but she had gone only a short distance when she was startled by the approach of the Roman soldiers. The captain of the guard sealed

the tomb and stationed the soldiers about the entrance.

Mary was startled by her hurried entrance. "Where have you been, mother?"

"I was going to look at His resting-place, when the Roman guard approached. They sealed the tomb and placed the soldiers about the entrance."

"Are they afraid some one will take Him away?" Mary asked.

"I know not. Perhaps it is the work of the priests. You know He said He would rise the third day, and the priests may want to prevent His coming forth."

"And do you think they want to apprehend Him if He should rise?"

The mother's heart failed for just a moment.

"I do not fear they will take Him again. He paid the price of their hatred."

"Mother," Mary said in an awed whisper, "do you think He will rise from His resting-place before the resurrection day?"

"All that He ever said was true, and what He said would come to pass has taken place, and why should He deceive us in the greatest things? He raised others from the dead; is it impossible for Him to return and take up His body?"

"All things are possible with Him," was all Mary said. She did not want to doubt, but she could not understand how the spirit could return to the body

unless some one commanded it—and who was to command it?

“His confidence was so much greater than ours because He was so much closer to the Father than we are. If we understood the Father as He did, His rising from the grave would not create doubt in our minds. But we lack that close fellowship, hence we doubt. However, some day we shall learn all things.”

“After we have completed our work we shall know all things,” Mary said. “In the meantime I pray our faith may not fail us.

The two women were silent after this and made themselves comfortable for the night. Sleep, however, did not overtake them until late in the night.

“I have been seeking for you everywhere,” John said the next morning. “I did not think you were here, and yet I might have known you would not be far from Him. I met Tobia on the highway, and he told me where you were.”

“I want to be near Him for a few days,” the mother said.

“So be it. I know your heart is torn, and you will find some consolation in being near His resting-place.”

“We are waiting for the first day of the week so we can anoint His body,” Mary said.

“And after you have performed your last act of love we will set out for Capernaum,” John said look-

ing at the mother. "You know He commanded me to care for you."

"John," Mary pleaded, "can mother not live with me? My father's house is large, and I know he will be only too glad to do this kindness for what the Master did for him and me. Indeed, I can not be without her; she is more than a mother to me."

"I know you are devoted to each other, but I can not disregard His command."

"Let us not make definite plans until I have performed my last act of love," the mother said.

"You shall do as your love dictates," John said. "Are you provided with all things necessary for your comfort?"

"Tobia is with us, and he will see to it that our wants are supplied."

"I will return the first day of the week, and then we can make further plans," John said as he left the two women.

The Sabbath was spent very quietly by the women. Mary meditated on the life and work of the Master and lamented His loss. She marveled at the mother that she was not grief-stricken, as Mary thought a mother would be who had lost her noble son in so tragic a manner.

The mother was yearning for the first day of the week. All sorrow had left her soul, and she waited with impatience for the hour when He would triumph

over hate and death. Conquer—yes, He would come out of the grave as He said He would, and as the Sabbath wore away a great joy and confidence crept over her spirit.

Night finally stole over the garden, but with the stillness and darkness a shadow of doubt came over her soul. Her confidence was not as convincing in the darkness as it was in the bright hours of the day. She did not lose faith, however, but as the supreme hour approached, her mind was slightly benumbed. As the night wore on a consuming desire to be near the grave when He came forth seized her. At first she curbed the desire, but it would not stay in leash, and she went outside the tent that at least she might look in the direction of His resting-place with the hope that she might see Him come forth.

Once outside, she unconsciously moved toward the spot where her heart and love were buried. The stillness was disturbed by voices that seemed terrified and by footsteps that indicated the persons were in a great hurry.

"They changed the guard," she said and continued slowly on her way.

The next instant she was startled as she saw a brightness around the tomb.

"What can it mean?" she asked. "Are His enemies not satisfied, and have they contrived some further cruelty on His lifeless body?"

But there was no sound of voices and she saw no one move about. A person in the whitest of raiment stepped through the low door of the tomb.

"The person moves and looks like my boy," she said, and every nerve and fibre tingled with excitement.

"It is my boy!" she cried with exalted spirit and ran toward Him.

"Mother! mother!" He cried as He gathered her in His arms.

"My son! my son!" was all she could say, for tears of joy made speech impossible.

"All things are accomplished," the son said, with a lofty spirit, after a moment. "And you are blessed among women, for you taught me the will of the Father, and your faith and constant encouragement the last three years helped me to bear the insults and hatred of my enemies. And your presence at the cross eased the pain that was excruciating. None understood or believed, but you were certain of triumph, and you believed I could face death calmly."

"Heaven can not rejoice more than I do. Now the world must believe that you were sent by the Father to proclaim His love."

"The world will believe, because I died for the truths I taught."

"And will you teach again?"

"A little while, and then I shall sit at the right hand of the Father, and a little later you will join me and our love shall continue unbroken."

"Who will tell the world the glad news of love?"

"My disciples, whom I taught, will go to the uttermost parts of the earth and proclaim the message of love. That which I taught will conquer the hearts of men everywhere, and the day will come when all men will love the truth."

"And will that come soon?"

"No, that will take many years, but it will come. The truth and love of the Father will conquer the world."

"My boy, you are noble beyond words, to give your life that the love of the Father may be spread throughout the world," she said with holy pride. And she tenderly brushed the hair from His forehead, and in doing so her fingers touched the scars the thorns had left.

"Do they hurt?" she said, as she took His face in her hands.

"No, they are forgotten in the joy that is mine."

Then she thought of the deeper scars and took His hand in hers.

"Oh!" she exclaimed as she felt the marks of the nails.

"My enemies had their way and left their mark of hate on my body. but these marks are proof that I did the will of the Father."

"You always did His will," the mother said with joy.

"The first signs of morning are at hand," He said. "You have watched all night and must seek rest."

"Will you come with me?" the mother asked.

"No, mother." He turned, and the next instant He was out of sight.

Her joy was so great that she fell into a deep sleep after she returned to the tent.

Morning came on apace, and Mary was up with the first of the early birds. She saw the mother was sleeping peacefully, and in the half-darkness she thought a smile was on the features of the woman. Mary made a hasty toilet and set out for the tomb. She was amazed when she approached the tomb and saw a brightness within, and asked herself who had removed the stone. "I am not the first," Mary said; "another is here before me and performing the rites I so desired to administer," and a mild jealousy welled up in her gentle soul.

On reaching the tomb she eagerly looked for her beloved Master, but He was not where they had laid Him, and sorrow overwhelmed her soul. She feared the hatred of the priests was not satisfied and that they took His body away.

It was then she noticed a young man sitting at the farther end of the sepulchre.

"For whom are you looking?" the young man asked in the sweetest accent.

"I am looking for Jesus!"

"He is not here; He is arisen, as He said. Have you forgotten His words?"

Mary did not answer, her sorrow was too great, and she turned away, when through her tears she saw a man, and thinking he might know what had become of her Master, she questioned him.

"Do you know where they have taken Him?"

"For whom are you looking?"

"Jesus, my Master, who was so cruelly killed by the Jews day before yesterday."

"And why are you seeking Him?"

"I loved Him with my whole heart and soul and am anxious to pay my last respect to Him. I found the grave empty; the enemy must have spirited Him away."

"Mary," Jesus said with concentrated love in His voice.

She was startled. The voice was like the voice of her Master. She quickly brushed the tears from her eyes and looked up, and, behold, there stood the One she loved. For a brief moment she was frightened, but she saw the kindness in His face, and she rushed to Him and fell at His feet and cried in ecstasy: "Teacher! Teacher!"

"Arise, daughter," Jesus said after a moment. "You did not remember my words, that I would rise the third day."

"I did not understand," Mary confessed as she looked into His face.

"Neither did my brethren; but they will understand after a while."

"Come, mother will be overjoyed to see you," Mary said after she had partially recovered herself, and she led the way toward the tent.

"Mother, mother, the Master has arisen and is here!" Mary cried as she rushed into the tent.

Mary turned, but the Master was nowhere to be seen. "Where is He?" Mary asked in bewilderment. "Is it or is it not all a dream?"

"I was the first to greet my son in His new life," the mother said with quiet joy. "He is arisen, and He will return again."

"Now He will be with us always," Mary said joyously.

"No; He has finished His work, and the apostles will now carry it forward."

The Master had defeated His foes and removed the fear of death; why should He not stay and enjoy His reward? That He would not teach or stay among them saddened her heart.

"Would His teaching henceforth be not more effective, now that He has given a new hope to man?"

"He has taught the will of the Father and suffered for His belief. And in a little while He will go to His reward."

"I do not understand; will He go to another country to receive His reward?"

"No, my daughter, He will ascend on high and sit at the right hand of the Father."

Mary could not comprehend how Jesus could sit at the right hand of God. How He would ascend, Mary could not understand.

"You are puzzled, I see," the mother said. "When He returns He will tell us all things."

* * *

The guard that had been stationed around the sepulchre rushed into the city and made their way to The palace of Caiphas.

"What is all this noise and confusion?" Caiphas said nervously when he answered the hasty summons of the soldiers. It was very early in the morning, but the high priest had slept but a few hours the last three nights.

"An angel appeared in our midst and a fear, such as we had never experienced, took possession of us. His presence seemed to paralyze us."

"And you Romans!" Caiphas sneered.

"I am a Roman soldier, and I have been in many lands and a score of battles. Fear I have never known; but the angel, if you call the unknown be-

ing by that name, whose brightness was more dazzling than the sun, caused every man to tremble," the captain of the guard said, and the rest gave hearty assent.

Fear had taken possession of Caiphas, but he dared not betray it. A high priest must be above fear in the presence of lesser men.

"Come with me," Caiphas said curtly and led the guard into the palace. He ordered the steward to provide refreshments for the soldiers, while he despatched a number of servants to summon certain members of the Sanhedrim. Only members who had been in favor of Jesus' death were summoned.

"What think you?" Caiphas said. "Early this morning the guard that was stationed at the tomb of the imposter rushed to the palace like a lot of cowards. They said an angel appeared among them and fear fell on all. If what they say is true, what will the people say?" Caiphas said in the greatest confusion.

"Do you think their story true?" asked one of the members.

"You would not deny something out of the ordinary had taken place if you had seen their frightened faces. They were beside themselves with fear."

"Did the man not say He would rise the third day?" a member asked.

"Yes," Caiphas answered with a sneer that lacked confidence. "He said many things that have not taken place, and I see no reason why we should believe this particular statement."

"But the guard; what is it they say?" inquired another member.

"They did not say that they saw the imposter. They simply said an angel came in their midst," Caiphas explained.

"There is a possibility that all they said is untrue," one member suggested.

"No, I believe a supernatural being was present," Caiphas admitted reluctantly. "They could not have feigned the terror I saw in their faces."

"Do you think He did rise from the grave?" a member asked Caiphas.

"I know not; the only way to be certain is to go and see."

All were silent. No one seemed eager to ascertain the truth.

"I will go and see," said one of the young members, and he left the palace at once. He was not keen to know if the imposter had arisen or not, but he desired to be in favor with Caiphas. He walked rapidly, but once outside the city he slackened his pace, indeed, he regretted that he had undertaken the mission. But he could not turn back. Once inside the garden he peered from right to left, and the

slightest noise made him jump. He finally came close enough to the tomb to see that the stone had been removed. That was all he cared to learn. He returned to the palace in the greatest haste.

"The stone is removed from the entrance and the tomb is empty," the Pharisee lied glibly.

They were amazed at the truth, and chagrined that even the putting to death did not conquer the impostor.

"And what must be done next?" they asked.

"Now that we are certain that He is not in the tomb the affair is simplicity itself," Caiphas said, regaining some of his usual arrogance. "We shall instruct the guard to say that His followers came during the night, while the guard was asleep, and took His body away."

"A Roman soldier is too proud of his profession to say that he slept while on duty," a member suggested.

"What you say is true; but gold in the hands of a Roman soldier will help him to overcome many scruples."

"As you say," the rest agreed.

Caiphas summoned the guard. "You did your duty well and you may have had cause to be frightened. If the man is risen, you say His followers stole His body while you slept."

The captain gave Caiphas a withering look. "A Roman soldier never sleeps while on duty."

"Of course he does not," Caiphas said smoothly, ignoring the look of the captain. "You divide this among your men, and they may not object to say they slept a few moments," and he handed the captain a bag of gold.

"That is all very generous in you," the captain said when he felt the weight of the gold, "but if the report should come to the ears of the governor, you know the penalty when a soldier sleeps while on duty."

"Have no fear; the governor and I are like brothers. He is ever eager to do me favors, and he will overlook a small matter like this."

"Your orders shall be obeyed," and the captain left the room.

"That matter was disposed of with little difficulty," Caiphas said with evil pride.

"So it was," said a member. "But what if the man has arisen? If He has the power to return and take up His body, we are helpless."

For a brief instant Caiphas trembled and his face turned ashen—when the high priest realized the power of Jesus.

"There will be a way to overcome Him," Caiphas said, but his words lacked conviction.

The two women waited patiently for the Master's return. They looked for Him for days, but He did not come. The time, however, did not seem long, as they were constantly talking about Him and the work He had done. Sometimes Mary thought of going home, as the teacher could see them there, but she did not have the courage to suggest it. The mother was waiting for the hour when He would return, as she knew He would not ascend without seeing her.

One day they were startled from their reverie by some one approaching the tent. They looked up, and He, for whom they had been waiting, was near.

"My son! Master!" The two women hastened to meet Him.

"We have waited patiently for you, my son," the mother said as she embraced Him.

"My time is short and I have many things to do. The brethren must be established in the truth, so that they will not falter after I am gone."

The two women were anxiously waiting for Him to say when He would go to His reward. The Master surmised their question.

"I know not the hour nor the day when the Father wishes me to come to Him. But it will not be long before the summons comes."

"No, mother," Jêsus said in answer to her look, "you cannot go now. The time will pass quickly, and when the Father does call you it will seem but

as yesterday that you held your infant son in your arms. The Father is well pleased with the manner in which you did your duty as a mother, and your reward shall be great."

"The Lord be praised that I have found favor in His sight and that He is pleased that I kept my trust."

A joy unspeakable was the portion of the three as they communed in the tent.

"Master, I love mother, as you know, and it would give me great pleasure if I were permitted to take care of her. My father's house is large, and I know he would be only too glad to have her with us."

Jesus looked at His mother.

"I know you commanded John to care for mother, but he might relinquish the duty if you suggested it to him," Mary said.

"Mother," Jesus said tenderly, "would it give you pleasure to live with Mary, the faithful?"

"It would, my son."

"Then you live with Mary, and John can devote his entire time to other work."

"Mother, that will be splendid!" Mary cried. "And John can make his home at our house and be near you."

"And now I must go," Jesus said after they had conversed for several hours. "The brethren need me, and I must commune with them while I have time." And Jesus departed.

"His presence brings heaven to earth," Mary said after He was gone.

"Heaven is where my son is."

Not many days after His first visit He again came to His mother and Mary. It was at sunrise, the most beautiful hour in the day. The mother saw Him coming up the path and ran to meet Him. As she approached, she saw a joy in His face that thrilled her.

"Is this the day?" she asked.

"The day is at hand; the Father desires me to come home."

"Praise Jehovah! I have suffered much, but it is all forgotten, and this day shall be a day of joy and gladness," the mother said with a heart overflowing with love.

"The struggle has been long and severe and the pain, that I might triumph, excruciating. The joy will be all the sweeter because I suffered."

"And the peace and happiness you brought to many will continue," the mother said with pardonable pride.

"The message of joy I brought will spread to the four corners of the earth, and the day will come when all men will hear and live my gospel of peace."

"Master," Mary said as she joined the two, "a great joy seems to be yours this glorious morning!"

"Joy of joys is mine, daughter," Jesus said. "This day the Father desires me to come home."

Mary was startled.

"Why are you surprised?"

"I can not realize that we shall not see you again."

"You shall see me again. When you approach the evening of life and your spirit is ready to take its flight, the scene of this morning will seem as though it had happened only yesterday."

"Yes, I believe," Mary said, but there was still a decided note of sadness in her voice.

"Come, rejoice with us," the Master said. "I am happy because I endured all things the Father asked of me and triumphed over all my foes. Mother is happy because she too was obedient and directed me in the path of duty in my youth. And you should be happy because you live in close fellowship with the Father and believed the gospel of love I preached; and your noble soul dwells in a body that is strong, but was once weak."

"I am happy," Mary said, "and rejoice with you. It was selfish in me to want you to stay. Mother and I know you will be much happier with Him, but you will be waiting for us and welcome us to the place where you are."

"You are happy," the Master said as He looked into her beaming face. "Let us go." And He led the way out of the garden. A short distance from

the garden they were met by the eleven. The company proceeded to a mountain east of Jerusalem. Here Jesus gathered His friends about Him and prayed for them, and breathed on them the love of the Father. While He was still speaking He was slowly lifted from the earth toward heaven, and they watched Him until He was out of sight.

"Now He is with the Father," the mother said. "My son was close to Him in spirit, but now He is face to face with the Father. Happy consummation of a faithful and obedient life."

After a time the eleven returned to Jerusalem and went to the upper room, where they tarried and waited for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.

The mother and Mary, exalted in spirit, returned to the garden.

"Shall we go to Magdala?" Mary said after they were rested and had collected themselves. "Rest and quiet will be appreciated after the excitement of the past few weeks."

"Yes, let us go to your home, where we can rest undisturbed."

Mary instructed Tobia to get everything in readiness to leave for Magdala after the noonday meal.

Isaac and Hannah were delighted to have their daughter home again, as the house was drab without her. They welcomed the mother of Jesus, and were honored to have her as a member of the family, and

they exerted every means to make her happy and comfortable. In a few days all had adjusted themselves to their new conditions, and it was a happy household.

Mary, however, was full of energy, and she was anxious to do something for her Master. She visited the poor and supplied their wants, she looked after the sick and gave them comfort. In all her work she never neglected to tell of her Jesus and what He taught. The glad news was received eagerly by the poor, and many believed in Him. Her work expanded as time went on, and the House of Marble was a refuge for those who sought spiritual advice and for those who needed material help. And it was not long until the home of Isaac was known as the home of comfort and joy; not only for the people of Magdala, but also for those who passed through the city. If a traveler was rich or poor, he was sure to find a welcome in the great house, where his wants were supplied, but none went away until Mary had told them the glad story.

The years sped on and one by one the older members of the House of Marble were gathered home, until Mary was alone in the great house, save for the servants. She never ceased to comfort the discouraged or aid those in misfortune—she was happiest when she was doing something for her Master.

It was forty and five years after Mary and the mother had returned to Magdala that a traveler riding a miserable donkey came to the House of Marble. The rider was a decrepit, withered and miserably-clad old man. He half tumbled from the donkey and with much effort made his way to the house.

"Come in, sir, and refresh yourself," Mary said as the traveler appeared in the doorway. "The day is exceedingly warm, and a rest will do you good."

"I can not pay you for anything you may do for me," the traveler said with a weak, cracked voice as he sank on the floor and removed his turban.

"Travelers who tarry with us are welcome if they pay or not. We do all for the Master's sake."

"For the Master's sake! He must be rich. Who is your Master?"

"Jesus; some called Him Jesus of Nazareth."

The old man gave a start and shrank from Mary. There was something in the man's manner that seemed to recall another scene, but Mary could not place it at the moment.

"Did you know Him?" Mary asked.

"No; I did not know Him," he replied without looking up.

"Then you missed much of the joy in life."

"Yes, yes, I did miss much—I missed all," he said and his withered body trembled.

There was something in the old man's manner that suggested to her this was Caiphas. "Can it be possible that this decayed old man is the arrogant and wealthy high priest?" she asked herself.

"Sir," Mary said, after she had been looking at the old man for some time, "are you Caiphas, who was high priest when Jesus was crucified?"

"I was high priest in name; in reality I was evil incarnate. It was I who desired the death of Jesus and saw it carried out," the old man said with quivering voice.

"But you are sorry that you plotted His death?" Mary said kindly.

"Sorry, yes, I was sorry before He gave up His spirit, when I saw the noble and good man He was as He hung on the cross and in His agony spoke words of love. I have been punished, but my punishment is not in proportion to the crime I perpetrated."

"And in what manner were you punished?"

"After I had committed that crime of crimes all men seemed to hate me. I lost office, I lost wealth, I was expelled from my home, and my wife and children died. Annas, my father-in-law, who was my best friend, contracted leprosy and died in abject poverty. During the siege of Jerusalem I suffered all manner of torture in body and mind. And here I am, a wretch, hated by men and disowned by God."

I can not die, and when I do pass beyond, I know what awaits me." And the old man buried his face in his bony hands and the withered body shook like a leaf in a storm.

"Friend Caiphas, have you asked Jesus to forgive you?" Mary asked with the greatest kindness.

Caiphas looked up at her for some time in a helpless sort of way. "It is thirty years and more since I was addressed as friend, and how can you find it in your heart to speak kindly to me?"

"Jesus taught us to love our fellow man," Mary said. "But you have not answered me; have you asked Jesus to forgive you?"

"He could not forgive a man who caused His death. It is impossible," he cried like a tormented soul, "to be forgiven."

Mary saw the old man's nerves were getting the better of him, and that it was more charitable to supply his wants than to continue the conversation. She ordered the servant to attend to her guest's needs.

"You must rest for a few days before you resume your journey," Mary said after Caiphas had bathed and dined.

"Am I to understand I can rest for a day in this house where all is kindness and will not be asked to pay?"

The old man could not grasp the idea that any one would dispense comforts and not seek remuneration.

"This home is open to all who need rest and quiet. You are welcome to stay until you feel able to continue your journey."

"I have never experienced such kindness, and it will give me pleasure to stay a few days," he said gratefully.

"I shall be only too glad to render the smallest kindness," Mary said as she left him that he might enjoy a much-needed rest.

Caiphas stayed two days, then he decided to stay another day. He was reluctant to leave a home where love was supreme.

"It is time that I resume my journey," Caiphas said the morning of the fourth day of his stay.

"And where are you going?" Mary asked.

"Nowhere in particular," Caiphas replied. "I wander from place to place and depend on the charity of the people. Not infrequently I am hungry and sleep in the open."

"If you are not going anywhere, why not tarry with us? A prolonged rest will benefit you greatly."

"But I feel that I am encroaching on your hospitality."

"I am doing just what the Master would have me do," Mary said, and she said it with such genuine sincerity that the guest raised no further objections.

After the high priest had been with her for two weeks, Mary found him in the upper room with his

face toward Jerusalem. A sigh escaped him as Mary drew near.

"Mary, you are a noble daughter of Israel. I have observed you closely since I am your guest, and I have never seen such unselfish and holy love as you show to all. The peace of mind you enjoy must be envied by the angels in heaven."

"The peace you speak of is possible for all to have."

"And how can it be attained?"

"By surrendering to the Son of Man."

"He would not listen to me. He could not find it in His heart to forgive me."

"I have not known Him to turn away any one who came to Him and honestly asked for pardon. We are happy in proportion as we help others, and the one delight of Jesus is to help man."

"If I had peace of mind and heart I would feel heaven was near," the old man said.

"Ask the Master to forgive you, and you shall have peace."

"Daughter, I shall do as you say," he said with great effort, "and on the morrow we will talk about it again."

"Ask and believe," Mary said as she left him, "and He will grant you peace."

The next morning one of the servants sought Mary in great haste.

"I knocked on the door of Caiphas' chamber, and there was no response," the servant said nervously.

On entering the chamber Mary was startled. The old wrinkled and hard-featured man of the previous day was not there. The wrinkles had disappeared and the hardness had left his face, and a smile overspread his features.

"Your prayer was answered, and you found the peace you so eagerly desired," Mary said as she touched the damp forehead of the once arrogant high priest.

A few years after the demise of Caiphas the city was startled one morning with the news that Mary had been called to her reward. The city lamented her death, as all loved her for her gentle spirit and unceasing labor of love.

